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THE BASUTOS

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THE BASUTO CHIEF MASUPHA IN UNIFORM, AND HIS STANDARD-BEARER.

*Frontispiece Vol. I.*

# THE BASUTOS

*THE MOUNTAINEERS & THEIR COUNTRY*

BEING A NARRATIVE OF EVENTS RELATING TO  
THE TRIBE FROM ITS FORMATION EARLY IN THE  
NINETEENTH CENTURY TO THE PRESENT DAY

BY

SIR GODFREY LAGDEN, K.C.M.G.

Formerly Resident Commissioner in Basutoland

WITH 70 ILLUSTRATIONS AND 9 MAPS



*Mosheshu  
Seal*

IN TWO VOLUMES

VOL. I

London    Ⓞ    Ⓞ    HUTCHINSON & CO.  
PATERNOSTER ROW    Ⓞ    Ⓞ    1909



TO  
THE BASUTO  
AMONGST WHOM THE AUTHOR  
LIVED AND WORKED FOR MANY YEARS



## PREFACE

THIS book is the result of my investigations and experience during a long association with Basutoland. I commenced the outline after fifteen years' residence in that territory ; but, in consequence of being unexpectedly transferred in 1901 for permanent duty in the Transvaal, was compelled to suspend the work until retirement from there in 1907 when Responsible Government was granted to that Colony.

In the following pages the purpose is to give a narrative of the principal events leading up to the situation in Basutoland to-day, and to show how it has developed under British protection and control.

It has been my endeavour to familiarize the reader in some degree with the country, and to relate so much of the annals of the Basuto, and of the government to which they have been subject, as would offer a picture of their past and present conditions of life.

The book does not pretend to recount all the incidents in their somewhat eventful history ; to do

so would require several volumes. The difficulty has been to determine what to omit. I am conscious that much has been left untold that might prove of deep interest.

Neither does it pretend in any way to deal with what is called the "Native Problem" in South Africa. That is a very large question the full meaning of which is often obscured. A large section of Colonial thought associates it with the doctrine of keeping the natives in rigid subordination to the whites. But it is a question of more profound significance. It involves considerations affecting the present status and evolution of the aboriginal races, and the relation in which they shall in future stand to the Europeans who are the dominant race and who desire to direct advancement of the natives upon lines in harmony with natural development. From that point of view the growth of the Basuto affords useful material for study.

I have fortunately been in a position to gather authoritative information from various sources upon all historical points since the tribe came into close contact with civilization.

But I have had also the great advantage for reference and use of a mass of official Basutoland Records collected from the archives at Cape Town and edited with introductory notes by Dr. G. M. Theal, Colonial Historiographer for Cape Colony. In common with many others, I am deeply sensible of the great public



services he has rendered to the cause of historical research and wish to express my indebtedness to him for much information derived from his several volumes of South African history.<sup>1</sup>

I have also gained considerable help from the various journals and publications of the Paris Evangelical Mission Society as well as from the memoirs of Messieurs Casalis, Mabile and Coillard, all of which I have been permitted to refer to.

My best thanks for the loan of books and documents and for other kind assistance are due to Mrs. Tucker, representing the French Protestant Society in England ; Miss MacKintosh ; Mr. Atchley, Librarian at the Colonial Office ; Mr. Boosé, Librarian at the Royal Colonial Institute ; Mr. Sloley, Resident Commissioner, and Mr. Wroughton, Government Secretary of Basutoland ; Dr. E. C. Long for meteorological statistics ; and to the Rev. E. Jacottet for allowing me to adopt his notes on the Sesuto language.

I am grateful for the use of photographs placed at my disposal by Mrs. Tucker, Mr. T. Lindsay Fairclough, Captain French of the Army Intelligence Department, Mr. Kennan and other kind friends.

G. Y. L.

<sup>1</sup> "History of South Africa from 1795 to 1872" ; "Ethnography of South Africa : 1505—1795," vol. i. (Sonnenschein.)



# CONTENTS

## VOL. I

### CHAPTER I

Physical and other features : a glimpse at the wild country pp. 1-7

### CHAPTER II

Of the difficulties in tracing origins. The Bushmen and Hottentots  
pp. 8-14

### CHAPTER III

Of the Bantu race, and the tide of settlement in Basutoland  
pp. 15-22

### CHAPTER IV

The rise of Moshesh : his antecedents . . . . pp. 23-32

### CHAPTER V

1820—1831

Rise of the Zulus : its effect upon Basutoland, Tshaka and  
Moselekatse . . . . . pp. 33-47

## CHAPTER VI

1832—1835

Moshesh has a respite and turns it to account : the introduction of Missionaries : how it was accomplished and some reminiscences  
pp. 48-61

## CHAPTER VII

1835—1843

Moshesh is perplexed by the approach of the Emigrant Farmers and appeals to the Governor of Cape Colony with whom he makes a Treaty : sends three of his sons to school at the Cape pp. 62-73

## CHAPTER VIII

1844—1847

Moshesh is drawn into the entanglements of British policy directed by Sir Henry Pottinger and Sir Harry Smith : is abused by one and praised by the other : the Queen's Sovereignty is proclaimed  
pp. 74-90

## CHAPTER IX

1848—1850

The revolt of the Emigrant Boers is crushed : Moshesh becomes embarrassed by the ambition of his sons and loses the confidence of the British Authorities, who make Boundaries and send him an Ultimatum . . . . . pp. 91-114

## CHAPTER X

1850—1852

The plot thickens against Moshesh who is attacked by Government forces and comes off victorious : the vacillating policy of H.M. Government : removal of Sir Harry Smith and Major Warden, and general disorder . . . . . pp. 115-135

## CHAPTER XI

1852

Sir George Cathcart, the new Governor, is impulsive : underrates the Basuto : sends an Ultimatum : invades Basutoland and comes off second best : the battle of Berea . . . . . pp. 136-160

## CHAPTER XII

1852—1854

The Sovereignty is abandoned : Sir George Clerk sent from England to compromise with Boers and Basuto : the Free State is given absolute independence but no boundaries are settled : Moshesh crushes the Batlokoa in a decisive battle . . . . . pp. 161-184

## CHAPTER XIII

1854—1858

General Cathcart is replaced by Sir George Grey as High Commissioner : border disputes about land and thieving lead to exciting correspondence, complications and rupture : another Ultimatum  
pp. 185-216

## CHAPTER XIV

1858

The Ultimatum is followed by a Declaration of War : hostilities follow with disastrous results to the Free State : the horrors of war : an Armistice proposed . . . . . pp. 217-242

## CHAPTER XV

1858

An Armistice agreed to : Free State are obliged to make overtures for peace : Sir George Grey called in and makes a fine effort to mediate and adjust the boundary : Moshesh after seeking and accepting arbitration fails to attend a Conference to further it and shows up badly . . . . . pp. 243-275

## CHAPTER XVI

1858—1862

Scares and conflicts caused by Jan Letelle : Basuto expansion to the East : Pretorius succeeds Boshoff as President of Orange Free State, and holds Conferences with Basuto : Sir George Grey mysteriously and abruptly recalled in the midst of important work : is immediately reinstated and finally retires : a retrospect : some of Moshesh's sound laws . . . . . pp. 276-308

## CHAPTER XVII

1862—1864

Sir Philip Wodehouse succeeds Sir George Grey : makes proposals, which are approved, for placing Agent in Basutoland but they are not acted upon : sends Commission to ascertain feelings of Basuto : is implored to adjust boundaries : is hampered by Imperial policy, hesitates, agrees, withdraws and finally does so : its value discounted by indiscreet statements : his award is in favour of Free State which strengthens it but disappoints Basuto : prospect dark . . . pp. 309-337

# LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

VOL. I

THE BASUTO CHIEF MASUPHA IN UNIFORM, AND HIS STANDARD-BEARER . . . . .	<i>Frontispiece</i>
	FACING PAGE
MALETSUNYANE FALLS . . . . .	4
IDOLS, ETC. . . . .	14
THE KETANE FALL . . . . .	20
MOSHESH IN 1833 . . . . .	26
BEAD WORK, KAFFIR DOLLS, ETC. . . . .	32
MOSELEKATSE, KING OF THE MATABELE . . . . .	44
FALLS ON THE TSUNYANE, LERIBE . . . . .	50
CAVE DWELLINGS, LERIBE . . . . .	62
REEF BARRIER ACROSS TSUNYANE RIVER, LERIBE . . . . .	74
SIR HARRY SMITH, BART. . . . .	82
POTTERY—WIRE WORK . . . . .	90
BOLAHLA SLOPES . . . . .	102
HAIRDRESSING . . . . .	114
A KETANE RIVER GORGE . . . . .	122
ON THE ROAD TO MAKHALING . . . . .	134
RACECOURSE, MASERU ; LANCERS' GAP ON THE HORIZON . . . . .	150

	FACING PAGE
YOALA BOHOLO, SIKONYELA'S STRONGHOLD . . . . .	168
BATLOKOA GIRLS DANCING . . . . .	174
MOSHESH IN 1854 . . . . .	180
SIR GEORGE GREY, K.C.B. . . . .	188
THE BROKEN ASSEGAI . . . . .	198
BOYS' INITIATION SCHOOL . . . . .	212
THE GORGE OF THE MALETSUNYANE RIVER BELOW THE FALLS	224
MORIJA TRAINING INSTITUTION: VIEW FROM WEST . . . . .	234
KETANE RIVER GORGE . . . . .	260
MUSHROOM ROCK, FOBANE NEK, LERIBE . . . . .	276
BALANCED BOULDER, NEAR SEKUBU, LERIBE . . . . .	276
SEKUNYANE NEHEMIAH, SON OF MOSHESH . . . . .	288
GIRLS AT HEATHEN SCHOOL . . . . .	298
SIR PHILIP WODEHOUSE . . . . .	308
SIR JOHN BRAND . . . . .	322

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## MAPS OF BASUTOLAND

I. AS DEFINED IN THE TREATY BETWEEN SIR GEORGE NAPIER AND MOSHESH IN 1843 . . . . .	72
II. SHOWING TERRITORY CLAIMED BY MOSHESH, THE TRACT ALLOTTED TO SIKONYELA BY SIR H. G. SMITH IN 1848, AND THE BOUNDARY BETWEEN THE BOERS AND THE BASUTOS PROPOSED BY SOUTHEY IN 1848 . . . . .	102
III. SHOWING TERRITORY GOVERNED BY MOSHESH IN 1849, AND THE TERRITORIES OF OTHER CHIEFS . . . . .	106
IV. AS DEFINED IN THE TREATY OF 29TH SEPTEMBER, 1858	272
V. BOUNDARY BETWEEN ORANGE FREE STATE AND BASUTO- LAND, IN TERMS OF TREATY OF 29TH SEPTEMBER, 1858	274
LARGE GENERAL MAP . . . . .	<i>End of Volume</i>



# THE BASUTOS

## CHAPTER I

Physical and other features: a glimpse at the  
wild country

THE map of South Africa will show Basutoland to be a small country of oval shape tucked up in the folds of the Quathlamba or Drakensberg mountains which pervade the whole of Southern Africa from the Cape to the Limpopo, running almost parallel with the eastern coast-line at varying intervals of distance. It has not infrequently been called the Switzerland of South Africa by travellers, reminded after prolonged journeys, before the advent of railways, across the flat plains of the Cape Karroo and parts of the Orange River Colony through which it is most easily approached, of its similarity in size and configuration to the little European Republic of that name.

Comprising an area of a little over 10,000 square miles, it lies between 29 and 30 degrees South Latitude and between 27 and 28 degrees East Longitude, having irregular but strong physical boundaries demarcating it from the Cape, Natal and Orange River Colonies into which it is securely wedged.

## The Basutos

From extreme north to south it has a river frontier extending almost without interruption along the Caledon from its source in the Drakensberg to the Cornet Spruit or Makhaleng, and thence with a short break to the Senqu or Orange River, the remaining boundaries being wild mountain barriers or water divides roughly defined. Disputes have frequently arisen and, in times past, conflicts and serious wars have been waged over disputed points in these natural boundaries; but, though the country has not been surveyed, beacons have now been erected in doubtful quarters which clearly indicate the general line and leave no cause for serious misunderstanding with the contiguous States.

The main axis of the territory extends for about 150 miles in a north-easterly direction with a breadth varying from 50 to 100 miles, the greater part being broken and mountainous dispersed with well-watered fertile valleys loaded with rich deposits, brought down in the flood seasons, particularly favourable to agriculture where cultivation is possible. Lying between the outer mountain slopes and the Caledon-Orange river systems is a belt of open country cultivated from end to end from which the natives produce enormous crops of grain. In that part the population is principally massed.

The Drakensberg, the superior mountain range of the Southern continent, at its loftiest points to be found principally on the side facing Natal, attains to an altitude approximately of 12,000 feet. These mountains form a semi-circle extending from the source of the Caledon to that point of the Orange where the

river frontier ends. Within them lie subsidiary ranges commonly known as the Maluti, a term signifying in the native language simply "Chain of Mountains." They traverse a great portion of the territory, so that the general elevation of the plateaux upon which the bulk of the population resides varies between 5,000 and 7,000 feet.

The people may therefore truly be described as mountaineers, and their environment has shaped in some degree their characteristics and pursuits. With a mean average temperature of  $60^{\circ}$ , seldom exceeding  $90^{\circ}$  in summer, and ranging to  $14^{\circ}$  in winter which can be excessively cold, the tendency is to produce the vigour and health usually associated with those races who have established themselves permanently at high elevations.

The climate is perhaps one of the finest in the world. Pure atmosphere, invigorating breezes, a crisp winter and abundance of sunshine combine to make it exhilarating and attractive ; but the wide range of temperature and tonic influence of high altitude are not without effect upon the nervous systems of Europeans who cannot profitably endure long residence without change to sea level.

As might be expected of a country so situated and with such surroundings it is picturesque in the extreme. Forming as it does the watershed of the Orange, Tugela and other considerable rivers, it is prolific in springs and beautifully watered from end to end. Pouring down from the mountains are a multitude of crystal streams which wash into the larger systems, fertilizing the lower plateaux where cultivation is

pursued and cooling the sun-baked soil. Much moisture becoming well distributed is caused by the commingling of currents of air of different temperatures which gives off extensive mists that form a chain round the peaks or float about the hill-sides until borne down by a warming sun to the surface of the ground and absorbed.

In few parts of the world probably are to be found wilder and more beautiful scenery. Once on the summits of the upper range, the traveller beholds a wonderful panorama not easily forgotten. Towering at intervals above the landscape are majestic peaks full of bold outline, girt about with giant slopes dipping proudly to a sea of lesser peaks below, which again shade off to deeply broken country in a rich setting; where for every sweet valley that is seen there may be hundreds screened away, and where silvery streaks looking insignificant from above are powerful streams cutting their way by force and fall until lost in some deep gorge.

Where the Divides are abrupt the water system accommodates itself in Falls of considerable height—one of the glories of Basutoland. Below these Falls, the most conspicuous of which are the Maletsunyane and Ketane, at a depth in the case of the former of over 630 feet and of the latter about 400, is a world of the weirdest description where the solitary wanderer experiences a sense of awe, for he feels almost to have sunk into the bowels of the earth. The mighty rush of water from above after floods has cleft the ground asunder and, quickening its course downwards through innumerable channels, has left gigantic pillars which in



MALETSUNYANE FALLS.



fantastic shape stand there frowning and threatening to fall upon the observer if he but stares at them.

In these places true solitude is to be found, for the natives as a rule have a superstitious dread of such forbidding haunts which are therefore frequented only by tigers and other carnivora who there find an undisturbed lair. But not only do the natives shun the abysses, which they associate with the presence of snakes and evil spirits, they fear also to approach the head of the Falls. It will be within the experience of many white people who have gone there that scarcely any native can be induced to follow them to the brink, without which it is impossible to get a fair view of the great plunge into the caldron below.

These Falls are not distinguished so much for their volume of water, inconsiderable in the dry season, as for their height, the suddenness of approach and the singular grandeur of their surroundings.

To reach the level of the plateaux below the Falls, winding paths are available down which the hardy and clever ponies of the country can if their heads are left alone pick their way for the most part over rocks and boulders. But nervous riders generally prefer to dismount and lead, in view of the risk of falling, for a fall in steep places may be fatal to man and beast.

In descending to the lower plateaux it is a striking picture to see wreaths of blue smoke curling up from tiny villages, and fields of corn and mealies interspersed along the terraced slopes, which on closer acquaintance are found difficult to arrive at over the rugged ground beset with unforeseen impediments. The marvel always seems to be, however were ploughs got up to such

places? It appears almost as if the inhabitants were imprisoned within ring upon ring of mountain walls, there being no signs of egress in any direction. But Passes, invisible until you wind into them, are available to which minute tracks lead along circuitous routes generally towards the higher shoulders where the gradient is, though steep, not excessive; but the pace is slow and the wind is cold.

At first sight the traveller on being told his direction is inclined to dispute with his guides as to why he cannot make straight for points which to the eye appear so possible to reach without deviation. In due time, however, the course which seemed so easy is found to be traversed by deep inaccessible ravines hidden from view, and those who are decoyed into taking direct lines pay the penalty of having to return, sometimes of being night-bound in parts where is neither firewood nor shelter. Shelter is a thing the wayfarer must religiously seek, though it be but a cave or nook, for when the wind blows cold it is hard to endure, and when rain or mist comes on there must be a full stop as the paths become dangerously slippery under rain and movement through thick mist is impracticable.

One conspicuous drawback to the scenic beauty is the almost entire absence of forest or even trees. With the exception of kloofs concealed in the folds of the mountains where the wild thorn and short scrub combine to form an impenetrable thicket, and a fringe of willow at intervals along the larger rivers, there is little or no wood to be seen, so that fuel at all times is a serious consideration. In the vicinity of the highest peaks overlooking Natal which is unfit for habitation



there is no wood at all, the ground being boggy and the outlook bare and inhospitable.

From swamps in that locality called the Mont-aux-Sources flow westward the head-waters of the Orange and Caledon rivers, while at no great distance the Tugela finds its source and after an almost precipitous drop of several thousand feet flows eastward, establishing the fact that at that point is the great Divide between the Atlantic and Indian Oceans.

It is not possible in a brief sketch to do justice to the picturesqueness of this interesting little country situated in the heart of the Drakensberg. More of it may be traced as the story of its people is related.

## CHAPTER II

### Of the difficulties in tracing origins. The Bushmen and Hottentots

IT would not be material to the purposes of this book to enter upon any elaborate thesis as to what is supposed to have been the origin of the native races from whom the Basutos are derived, or seriously attempt to single them out as an entity from the large number of Bantu tribes who joined the great migration from the north centuries ago.

The attempt would mean a vast amount of conjecture. In the first place neither the Basuto nor any of their kindred tribes possessed records or even a written language when their country was first explored. It was the missionaries who constructed a grammar for them and translated the first standard work appearing in their language, viz. the Bible. In so doing the vocabulary was increased by many terms which had no meaning to the natives before their contact with civilization. To give one out of many instances of the borrowing of words, we are told that when the language was being framed there was nothing corresponding to "horse," which was not an indigenous animal, its nearest approach being "pitsi," meaning zebra. A new word

“pèrè” was therefore coined, that being a phonetic variation of the Dutch word “paard,” pronounced “peart.” In this way the vocabulary which was originally of a most limited order has been helped by the introduction of foreign words and expressions; but the interpretation at all times from the native to a European language is cumbrous. Thus an English word, taken at random, “appeal,” has no corresponding word in Sesuto, its dictionary signification being rendered in the following sentence associated with removal of cases from one court to another: “ho tlōsa taba lekhōtleng le leng ho e isa ho le leng le phamaheng, biletsa mothō bopaki, ipeletsa ho mothō e mong.”

And without a written language there was no literature. Consequently, what remains of their very early history and traditions has come down to us in the form of narrations recorded mostly by missionaries in the style repeated to them at intervals by old men who had good memories and could be humoured into the relation of reminiscences. It is no easy matter at any time to get an aged person who is full of a long story of adventure and strife, partly his own personal experiences and partly what he learnt from others, to impart it freely. Still harder is it to get a connected account, for with the necessary breaks for business and rest the thread of it is bound to be a little lost and the charm of it to suffer. In order to resume after a break, it is necessary first to put the relator in a sympathetic frame of mind and then to establish the line of continuity.

With natives particularly both of these are difficult matters. How many people under the importunities of

little ones in the "children's hour" resist the pressure to go on where the old story half-ended? It seems so much easier to invent a new one, and even that is laborious, for it entails a mental effort which the inclination is always prone to fight against. But a native simply cannot take up a thing half-way. It doesn't seem possible for him to utilize that cell in his brain which by the touching of some chord will give him the power of resumption where he left off. Many indeed are those having had to learn and adapt themselves to native ways and idiosyncrasies who have writhed under their tediousness in giving evidence when, in reply to a magisterial question on points of fact, the witness begins at a far-off beginning and labours through a labyrinth of incidents having apparently no bearing upon the question. Yet, to get the fact effectively brought out, it is essential to bear with the witness, to endure the long process of that story in which the fact is wrapped up, without check, or else the whole thing breaks down.

Only by assiduous toil and long-suffering have a few earnest people bent on the interesting pursuit of historical research been able to write down and preserve what was in the memories of old men intelligent enough to recapitulate it, and then only to learn a good deal that was irrelevant and coloured. No great advantage will however be gained by the repetition of legends gleaned from the minds of ancient warriors, captivating nevertheless as they are. It will be more to the point here to relate briefly what is generally accepted as fact in respect of the antecedents of the country prior to its occupation under the great wave

which carried the Bantu races with irresistible force over the whole Southern continent, depositing them so promiscuously as to necessitate their re-grouping.

It is commonly believed and stated by those who have devoted themselves to the study of the Ethnography of South Africa that, for a considerable period at any rate before the first discovery of the Cape of Good Hope, the greater part if not the whole of the Southern continent was inhabited by a tribe or people called Bushmen.

These Bushmen, who though originally very prolific have now almost disappeared from the face of the earth, were of the lowest type of mankind and were deemed to be incapable of assimilating themselves to European civilization. They were coarse in feature, dwarfish of frame and of a yellowish brown colour. Their low order of intelligence and somewhat repulsive appearance, coupled with the fact that they were endowed with strong thieving propensities, made them a mark for destruction by all other people with whom they came in contact. Even the aboriginal African races who swept through and eventually replaced them regarded them as little better than wild animals to be exterminated, and this was ultimately their lot.

Having no language other than consisted of clicks and hoarse sounds which could find no significance in writing, and no means of verbal communication with the rest of humanity, they were unable to appeal for help to those who might otherwise have preserved them, and naturally went down fast before the advance of higher orders.

Their story is of course a pathetic one. The efforts of a few enthusiasts to collect and preserve living specimens with the hope of constructing a language and exchanging elementary ideas were admirable but met with poor success. Traces of them are still to be found in cave dwellings where their impressions of the animals and creatures with which they were familiar are depicted in rude paintings of great durability, coloured apparently with iron oxides, that have withstood the ravages of time and weather. They stand alone amongst aboriginal races as capable of this artistic kind of work, the singular character of which has found admirers who have at great pains and expense made facsimiles of the paintings, a selection of such being lately on view at the Anthropological Institute in London.<sup>1</sup>

When hunted from the plains, the Bushmen took shelter, amongst other exclusive places, in the inner mountains of Basutoland where a small colony of them were relentlessly pursued and destroyed like baboons in quite recent times. A good many accounts have been written of these interesting people, of their characteristics as formidable hunters without weapons other than bows and arrows, of their roaming and homing instincts, their wonderful capacity for mimicry and their unique habits of life. But the general verdict is that their intelligence was too low for development, and that, being unable to emerge from their wild condition and usages, they had to disappear because their existence was no longer possible.

<sup>1</sup> A book relating to these paintings, with coloured plates, by Miss Helen Tongue and Miss D. Bleek, is now in the press.

Allied to the Bushmen in many respects were the Hottentots, but where the common ancestors of both originally dwelt is unknown. There is evidence that the former issued at a remote period from Central Africa, to be followed at a great interval by the Hottentots who, with a coarse language of clicks but more intelligible, had learnt the art of smelting minerals and the manufacture of lethal weapons. In their superior way they looked upon the Bushmen as little better than wild game to be slain at pleasure. In pursuance of that idea they took possession of the country occupied by their inferiors, killing the men whenever possible and preserving the women for concubinage. Thus they levelled downwards by blood association with lower orders and prepared the way for their own extinction.

In appearance the Hottentots were not altogether dissimilar to the Bushmen, though larger in stature, more pronounced yellow in complexion and having a greater amount of hair which was however but sparsely dotted about in small tufts. Their language in spite of its abundance of clicks was capable of reduction in a rough form to writing. They had learnt the value of possessing cattle and sheep as a medium of wealth, lived in huts, manufactured cooking-pots and other articles of domestic use, and believed in the direct agency of superior powers in certain affairs.

But unlike the Bushmen, from whom they were clearly a step removed, they proved capable of assimilating certain habits of civilized life and adapting themselves to association with Europeans to whom they became most useful as shepherds and wagon-

leaders. Remnants, here and there, abandoning the nomadic life so characteristic of them, settled down peacefully under the restraints imposed by European government, learning the use of implements for the cultivation of land in the production of crops. But in the end they paid the penalty of degeneration and, losing both their language and entity, gradually sank until their identity as a tribe amongst the races can scarcely now be discerned.





WOODWORK.



IGUANA.



BABOON.

IDOLS.



## CHAPTER III

### Of the Bantu race, and the tide of settlement in Basutoland

WHEN we come to the Bantu, of whom the Basuto are a section, we find a picturesque and virile race who after many vicissitudes are the survivors of a great struggle from which they have emerged in a fit and lusty condition. The term Bantu is a native word meaning "people."

No conjecture even, in the absence of positive information, will give us the date when, in following the route taken by their predecessors the Hottentots, they began or completed the great migration they are believed to have made from North and Central Africa southwards across the Zambesi. Neither is it determined from whom they originally sprung, for, although their languages bear some affinity to those of dark races in other continents and spheres, their variation as regards physiognomy and characteristic is distinctly marked.

It is sufficient for the purpose to state that at least three centuries ago the struggle for existence in the north drove them southwards in bands, and that, overcoming the Hottentots and scattered Bushmen, neither

of whom were able to offer serious or combined resistance, they made settlements first of all in the arid region of the west known as the Kalahari. Continuing to migrate as the years rolled on, in the same direction and being dissatisfied with the lack of moisture in those parts they gradually pressed forward, extending over the whole Southern continent and establishing themselves in favoured localities where they federated their strength and then carried on the pursuit of making war upon each other. The most peaceful in character seem to have clung tenaciously to the ill-watered tablelands of the west, where marauding expeditions directed against them were more difficult of execution and the approach of enemies along defined water-routes could be more easily detected. The warlike tribes on the other hand being more impulsive and adventurous gravitated towards the east which was bushy and more fertile.

It is not known who if any other than Bushmen were in those early days the inhabitants of Basutoland, for no traces have been discovered which give a clue to it. But we have information that the country was eventually peopled by clans separated or driven from the various groups into which the Bantu invaders from the north had divided themselves. Of these groups, two in principal stand out conspicuously as having figured in the modern history of South Africa, viz. :

(1) The Amaxosa, Abatembu, Amapondo, Amabaca, Amazulu, Amatonga, Magwamba and Matshangana, all of whom bent their way in the first instance towards the east coast.

(2) The Baralong, Bakwena, Batlapin, Bahurutsi,

Bamangwato, Bangwaketsi, Bavenda, Makalanga and Basuto.

There were many other tribes not here mentioned and many subdivisions. Thus the Basuto in the above classification are not identical entirely with the present tribe of that designation who, as will hereafter appear, are formed of a cluster of various tribes. There are for instance great numbers known under the same name living in the Transvaal, who, though speaking more or less a similar language, owe allegiance to Sekukuni, a direct descendant of Mokhatla, the founder of the Bakhatla tribe, and not to the reigning family of chieftainship in Basutoland.

The two groups above mentioned were distinguished from each other in appearance, language and characteristics. Neither group consisted of pure negroes such as are found in North and West Africa but were evidently descended from them by mixture with other races, predominantly the Semitic race. As the process of mixture spread over a long period, the result was to produce, in the Bantu, types representing all shades of the colour peculiar to African aboriginals varying from black to light brown, and all diversities of character, mental and physical. Thus in the same tribes would be found some men having features of the lowest type with thick lips, flat noses and narrow foreheads, and others of a manifestly higher order with well-formed features in respect of nose, lips and forehead such as might easily have belonged to an ancestor derived from one of the subdivisions of the Caucasian race.

But the great majority were Negroid, that is of a mixture in which the negro strain preponderated. Those in group 1 classified as Zulu-Kaffirs who may be termed the East-coast Tribes were as a rule black of complexion, tall, well-developed men remarkable for muscular strength and powers of endurance. The second group classified as Bechuana-Basuto or Interior Tribes, who distributed themselves over the inland plateaux, were generally of a somewhat lighter colour, smaller in stature and build but rather more active of disposition.

Between them they had many languages or dialects but not one in particular that could be regarded as a medium of universal communication, though, as many of the roots are identical, all seem to have been drawn originally from a common stock. In respect of language the tribal grouping was fairly well marked, that is to say amongst the Zulu-Kaffirs the sound corresponding to the letter R was wanting, whilst amongst the Bechuana-Basuto tribes in place of the letter L a soft D was substituted. (Some notes upon the Sesuto language will be given in an appendix.)

In course of time some of the various tribes in the second group were forced by continuous pressure upon them from the north and other circumstances to break away from their settlements in the vicinity of what is now known as Bechuanaland towards the midlands. They had become a good deal subdivided, adopting sometimes the names of their chiefs as a national designation and at others that of some animal or vegetable. Thus, the Bakwenas were people of the crocodile ; Batlapis, those of the fish ; Bachuenengs, of

the monkey ; Bataung, of the lion ; Banares, of the buffalo ; Batlous, of the elephant ; Bamoraras, of the wild vine. Sections of these and many other tribes to be mentioned wended and fought their way towards Basutoland, occupying the country all around it which had become famous for perennial springs such as were almost unknown on the Kalahari side where water had to be burrowed for in dry river-beds. The most powerful branch at that time were the Bakwenas (of the crocodile) who eventually asserted and established themselves as the paramount family.

However, at the beginning of the last century five tribes in particular were in occupation of the wild country comprised in the Maluti mountains and the valley of the Caledon river. They were called the Bamonaheng, Batlokoana, Baramokhele, Makhoakoa and Mayiane. This combination of tribes, speaking more or less the same dialect and claiming descent from common ancestors, became known at that time as the Basuto. Several other tribes had established themselves at no great distance, choosing strong natural positions from which they could make a show of defence against aggression ; but they were constantly attacked and overcome, some being so completely broken as to lose their entity and be compelled to submit to absorption with other tribes led at the moment by chiefs of strong individuality.

Following the course of the Vet and Sand rivers with their cattle and belongings came a strong section of the Bataung (people of the lion) who formerly held a dominating position amongst the Bechuana tribes. Inter-tribal quarrels and a desire for

new pastures induced this section to feel its way cautiously along until they reached and effected a settlement in what is now known as the Harrismith District; thence to be driven after much loss to Mekuatleng and finally to that part of South Basutoland where the Cornet Spruit or Makhaleng river forms a junction with the Caledon and where they have ever since remained. The Bataung were more given to pastoral habits than to fighting and were notorious for border-thieving, a propensity which led them and the Basuto in later years into serious trouble with other tribes as well as with the Boers who became their neighbours in the Orange Free State. They were a prolific race but were not distinguished for stamina or intelligence, and the hand of their daughters was not often sought in marriage by the Bakwena Chiefs. They became however in due course a corporate part of the Basuto nation.

Another tribe which played a great part in the incessant border warfare which prevailed for many years prior to the consolidation of the Basuto were the Batlokoa who frequented the valley of the Wilge river and afterwards infested the broken country between it and the lower Caledon. Their chief Makotsho married a daughter of the Basia chief, a warlike and determined woman subsequently named Ma-Ntatisi. Her second child, a son named Sikonyela, was a man of tyrannical and bellicose disposition and, together with his mother, figured conspicuously in the history of the disturbed time. Their fierce restlessness afforded no peace for their followers who deserted in considerable numbers and helped to swell the ranks





THE KETANE FALL.



## The Tide of Settlement in Basutoland 21

of the Basuto nation then forming, a course which tribes weaker and less important than the Batlokoa were finding it expedient for other reasons to follow.

In Southern Basutoland along the inaccessible upper reaches of the Orange River were settled a clan called the "Baphuti." Of mixed blood and speaking at first various languages, they congregated in independent units under a chief named Mokuane, whose son Moirosi amalgamated them and later on proved himself so formidable in numbers and prowess that the Basuto were glad to incorporate them in their consolidation scheme, as a buffer for protection against the sudden incursions of hostile armies from Natal and other parts which threatened the eastern flank of the country.

Similarly, the Baralong under Moroko, a descendant of Morolong, a noted Bechuana chief, who were located in the open country round the Modder River, deemed it desirable to make friendly overtures to the Basuto with the result that, though not actually incorporated, they were taken over as vassals on the understanding that the territory extending from the Leeuw river to near the present site of Bloemfontein then under their occupation should be held under feudal tenure and allegiance to Basuto chieftainship which, by accessions of this character, grew in dimensions and influence without going through the process of conquest by force of arms.

It is of interest to note what a wide tribal area was drawn upon for contributions to this communal formation. Some idea of it may be gathered from the memoirs of Nehemiah, one of the elder sons of Moshesh, a student and educated man of vast memory

who, in describing the constitution of the Basuto nation, stated as follows :—

“The tribes which form the Basuto nation are, Bafuking, Bakwena, Batlokoa, Basia, Bachuening, Banareng, Batlounng, Bataung, Baputing, Baphuti, Bakhatla, Bakulung, Bahaleroa. These are from the *Siboko*, or coat-of-arms. Then there were clans named after persons such as the Bahamaicane Basili, Bamokoteri, Bamotlumi, Bamonaheng, Bamoshesh, Baramokheli, Bakwakwa, Batlakwana, Bamakkatong (who were Batlokoa separate from those of Sikonyela). All these claim to be Basutos.

“The principal clan among the Basutos were the Bakwena. The Bafuking are considered real Basutos, and chiefs always try to marry Bafuking wives. The Bafuking were considered a royal race, but their clans were much scattered through the Bakwena country, and their *Siboko* (coat-of-arms) was the Dew, or the Rheebok (Letsa), for they did not eat that animal, or the Hare, of which they would only eat a portion of the ear, not cooked.”

From whatever source information is sought the weight of evidence goes to show that the Basuto, on reaching a state of maturity solid enough to be termed a “Nation,” had been formed of a conglomerate of clans as above indicated which for the common purpose of offence and defence had combined together for residence in and about the great stronghold of the Quathlamba mountains called Basutoland. That combination was effected principally through the genius of a great chief named Moshesh.

## CHAPTER IV

Men, like cattle, follow him who leads.

BYRON.

### The rise of Moshesh: his antecedents

WITH the rise of Moshesh we begin to get in touch with memoirs and records of a reliable character which introduce us to the history of the Basuto but lack many of those fascinating details that went to make it up ; when the times were savage, the actors wild and brave, and the ruling passion was contest for supremacy amongst chiefs and people not altogether deficient in chivalry. It was all the more exciting because no man who rose to momentary power could calculate from the hazy intelligence then at disposal from what quarter he might be smitten and vanquished by unknown and stronger foes, or how soon his women and children would be wrenched from him and his villages and lands destroyed—how soon in fact the power rapidly gained by him would vanish under the touch of a mightier. No wonder, then, that after generations of strife and uncertainty there was a profound longing for rest and security and that the tendency was toward any form of blending of forces which might lead to it.

As in the history of all nations during the process of rising to any kind of enduring prominence the inspiration of the moment at a critical period has furnished the man of action, so it was that one of the required prescience and ability was forthcoming for the task in respect of Basutoland. We have indicated some of the components loosely drawn together to form the nucleus of the nation and may now inquire something of the man who embodied them, his antecedents, character and aims.

Moshesh, who derived his name from *Mosheshwe* meaning Shaver or Leveller, together with his near relatives the Ba-monaheng, was descended from Cholwani, one of the progenitors of the great Bakwena family. He was the son of Mokachane and was born at Monkhoaneng near Butha-Buthe in the vicinity of the Thlotsi river of North Basutoland a few years before the year 1800, the exact date of his birth being unknown. His father and grandfather were also said to have been born there but that question is wrapped in doubt.

It is recorded that Pete the grandfather of Moshesh was not a natural son of his reputed father Sekake who was a Bakwena chief; that is to say, when Sekake died young his youthful widow should, according to native custom, have been taken over by his brother for the purpose of preserving succession. But the brother would not, and therefore a distant relative but intimate friend of Sekake (a member of the Amahlubi tribe who were Batlokoa and a relation of Umtimkulu father of Langalibalele) openly took the position which the brother should have taken. He it was who

became the actual father of Pete who was thereupon accounted to be the son of Sekake "by cattle," referring to the cattle given for the mother.

The unfortunate Pete, when in his old age he had come to reside under his grandson Moshesh, and whom he was following in a migration from one stronghold to another, lagged behind the main party with the women and children, and being caught with five other men was ambushed, killed and eaten by cannibals.

Mokachane was therefore not of very direct descent; nor, though a great hunter, did he possess any of those rare qualities for fighting and zeal which brought an hereditary leader into prominence in those days. Moreover, he was of unattractive appearance. As however he was the father of a great man, it is interesting to know the impressions formed of him by the first missionaries who made his acquaintance. But few white people had then seen him, for he shunned the society of strangers. In memoirs of early missionary life in Basutoland, by the Rev. E. Casalis, he is thus described :—

"Mokachane was a dry old man with a cynical look, abrupt and brief of speech. Our appearance in the country appeared to interest him very little. . . . Sugar was in his opinion the only good thing we had brought into the country. . . . After having looked at us a moment, making a shade of his hand in order the better to take in our features, he said to his son, 'Very good: you have now the direction of affairs; I have seen your white men; *do with them what you judge best!*'"

“He was in truth a singular personage. Suspicious and mocking, a thorough egotist, he despised men and did not conceal the fact. . . . He loved to compare his subjects to flies who are only drawn together by the sweet morsel which they find in the plate. At bottom he was more roguish than wicked. Without being warlike he had more than once made war, like other chiefs; but, either from superstition or from scruple, he had imposed on himself a law never to slay any one with his own hand. He directed the action and made all the combinations necessary to prevent the enemy from escaping him, but he left the work of blood entirely to his subordinates. Surrounded by people extremely superstitious, he lent himself to their practices, but not without rendering himself guilty of many profanations. In paying the diviners for instance he did not hesitate to tell them that he regarded them as the biggest impostors in the world.”

We have happily a description of both father and son drawn by the same authority who was fortunate enough to see them together on the same day in the year 1833 when the French missionaries made their journey of exploration to feel the way for settlement in Basutoland. Relating the story of their arrival at the summit of Thaba Bosigo (Mountain of Night) where they were to be received by the Basuto, M. Casalis portrays Moshesh in the following terms:—

“Suddenly a personage attired in the most fantastic fashion advanced, a long wand in his hand, growling and snapping like a dog. At his appearance everybody retreated and fell into line, making in this way





MOSHESH IN 1833.



an immense semi-circle behind a man, seated on a mat. There is Moshesh, said Krotz to me. The chief bent upon me a look at once majestic and benevolent. His profile, much more aquiline than that of the generality of his subjects, his well-developed forehead, the fulness and regularity of his features, his eyes a little weary as it seemed, but full of intelligence and softness, made a deep impression on me. I felt at once that I had to do with a superior man trained to think, to command others, and above all himself.

“He appeared to be about forty-five years of age. The upper part of his body, entirely naked, was perfectly modelled, sufficiently fleshy but without obesity. I admired the graceful lines of the shoulders and the fineness of his hand. He had allowed to fall carelessly round him from his middle a large mantle of panther skins as lissom as the finest cloth and the folds of which covered his knees and feet. For sole ornament he had bound round his forehead a string of glass beads to which was fastened a tuft of feathers which floated behind the neck. He wore on his right arm a bracelet of ivory—an emblem of power—and some copper rings on his wrists.”

This may be taken to be a correct picture of the man who was to bring into life the new Basuto nation and to shape its destinies through many storms in its early career.

Moshesh had nothing much to boast of in his immediate ancestors, who had left him a poor inheritance and many enemies. His lineage could not be traced beyond his great-grandfather, Sekake. His marriage

brought him no accession of strength. He had married Mamabela, afterwards named Mamohato on the birth of her first son; she was a daughter of Seephephe son of Ntatli third son of Modise, a chief of the Bafuking, his maternal grandfather.

His cousin, Motlumi, of an elder branch had enjoyed the paramountcy over a section of the people then called Basuto. Caring little for war or great possessions, he was remarkable for his knowledge of men and medicines, and his name was handed down for generations as that of one whose memory should be revered. At his death about the year 1815 he predicted that, of all the young men he saw around him, Moshesh alone would achieve distinction and attain paramount authority on a large scale by uniting under him many of the clans who had not only distracted the country by their feuds but had weakened themselves to such an extent as to become a prey to every marauding expedition that came along.

Moshesh was made acquainted with this announcement and, though by no means grasping or unduly ambitious, took up the burden and determined to fulfil the prophecy. And he commenced, as he continued throughout his life, by avoiding the cruel and tyrannical line of conduct which had brought fame to chiefs who had gained eminence in other parts of South Africa. He displayed early promise of leadership in a variety of ways. Not only had he won distinction by personal bravery and good generalship in his many previous encounters, but on finding himself elevated to a commanding position over a medley of tribes which had gathered round him, he realized the

situation and characterized his advent to power by prompting reforms in the method of government.

These reforms were not as a rule acceptable to other chiefs who had been brought up to regard the brutal exercise of power as the only medium of success ; nor did the common people, who were accustomed to and content with harsh and despotic treatment, believe in them. They consisted of the introduction of humanity and justice, and mildness when possible, into a form of government which had of necessity to be autocratic and firm.

Moshesh recognized that, by sparing his enemies who submitted to him and protecting all who came under his banner, he would gain in numbers and exact the tribute of respect and affection. In so doing he justified the great expectations formed of him by Motlumi and soon became the central figure amidst groups of tribesmen who were all eager to safeguard their holdings and, with some exceptions, anxious for a respite from internecine warfare and plunder.

His attitude had the effect of rallying to him from all sides tribal fragments seeking security under a ruler who had manifested his strength and whom they regarded as an exalted personage, who was capable of tempering mercy with justice, and by whom agricultural lands could be assigned and occupied in safety.

It will be seen that the character and qualifications displayed by Moshesh on the threshold of his career were of no mean order. Later events proved the capacity which he possessed. It enabled him to sustain his reputation, to bear down the troubles and opposition which beset him, and to emerge from the severe

test with credit and a name honoured in the memory of the native nations.

His primary task was to humour and blend the miscellaneous forces gathered under him, a savage crew accustomed to prey upon each other like wild animals, who, when not amenable to advice, needed firm restraint. The task was harder because they spoke a lot of different dialects and were dissimilar in habits, customs and other manners not easy to reconcile. It required no mean effort and was not accomplished without stern opposition as well as resentment and intriguing even on the part of the members of his own family. Indeed, they often broke away from control and involved the chief in serious complications which defeated his policy and forced his hand. But he stuck to them so far as he could, bringing them and himself out of unforeseen difficulties, eventually landing them in a masterly way under the protection of the Queen of England.

Though he showed early signs of a desire to promote progress amongst them, their condition, which at the time was one of extreme backwardness and unsettlement, did not yield to the idea ; their superstitions, barbarous demeanour and reluctance to advance to any higher state of life made the prospect look hopeless. Nevertheless, by his example, his invitation to and reception of Christian missionaries against the popular will, and a genius for foresight remarkable in its clearness, he led them in spite of their inclinations gently along the path of improvement.

In so far as his struggles and negotiations with

white people are concerned, the bald facts are on record. But the many impediments and dangers that encompassed him in the affairs of state were known in full to few but his old councillors and they were not chroniclers. He naturally shared the faults and weaknesses common to humanity. Of these his detractors made the most ; yet none could deny that he was a great man in his day.

For the information of the reader, certain terms in common use affecting Basutoland are given below : also genealogical trees showing the principal members of Moshesh's family some of whose names will appear in the ensuing pages.

*Mosutu* means a single individual.

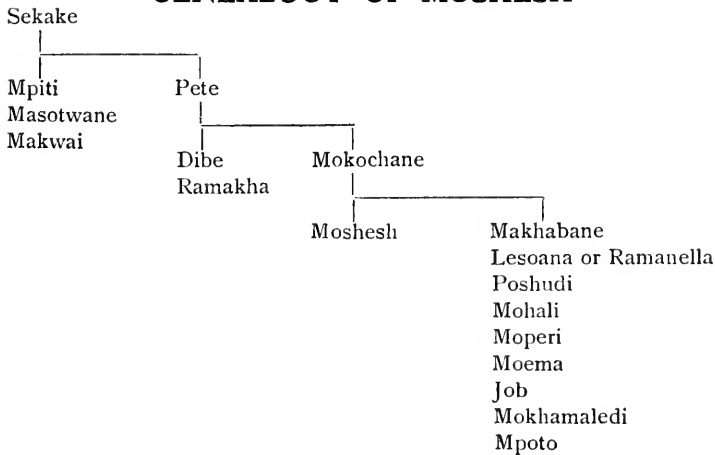
*Basuto*, two or more individuals, or the tribe collectively.

*Sesuto*, the language.

*Lesuto*, the country.

*Basuto*, an adjective, as relating to people or things.

### GENEALOGY OF MOSHESH



## CHILDREN OF MOSHESH

## MOSHESH

*Mohalinyane*  
*Motsoai*  
*Kuidi*  
*Pcane*  
*Tsita*  
*Mathlole*  
*Makebe*  
*Tlalele*  
*Tsekelo*  
*Mota*  
*Ntsane*

FOUR SONS BY PRINCIPAL WIFE			
1	2	3	4
<i>Letsie</i>	<i>Molapo</i>	<i>Masupha</i>	<i>Majara</i>
—	—	—	—
Lerothodi	Josifa	Lepoqo	Leshoboro
Bereng	Jonathan	Mosinoa	Napo
Theko	Joel	Marthinus	Tsipinare
Sehothhle	Mpaki	Faku	Sebolai
Maama	Modiboea	Senekal	
Seiso	Khetisa	Moiketsi	
Makhabane	Mosito	Lebese	
Sekhobe	Seetsa	Tumo	
Mojela	Lesiamo		
Nkoebe	Tiasoa		
Mashapha	Khabo		
Tsipinare	Mosuoane		
Thaabe			
Motseki			
Mosuoce			
Mofu			
Mohapi			
Sekete			

*Neko*  
*Makhobalo*  
*Nehemiah*  
*Matsoso*  
*Nena*  
*Sofonia*  
*George*  
*Thladinyane*  
*Mokhetli*  
*Selebalo*

Lerothodi—succeeded Letsie  
 Letsienyane—succeeded Lerothodi  
 Paramount Chief in 1908





BEAD WORK AND OTHER PRODUCTIONS.



KAFFIR DOLLS, WEAPONS, ETC.



## CHAPTER V

Rise of the Zulus: its effect upon Basutoland,  
Tshaka and Moselekatse

1820—1831

WHILST Moshesh was engaged in the effort to hold together the fragments that unexpectedly grew to him and was steadily feeling his way to power, stirring events were taking place at no great distance on the East Coast where a mighty chief of a different character had arisen whose daring and ferocity changed the course of affairs and filled the whole country with dismay. So much were the early associations of Basutoland influenced by that chief, viz. the Zulu, Tshaka, that it will be relevant here to give some account of his origin and policy, the effects of which were so far-reaching.

Not only was he responsible for breaking up and pursuing many of the powerful tribes who first fell upon the people of Moshesh and then in a desultory way sought that chief's protection, but he was the means of initiating the Bantus into the art of fighting in masses, the knowledge of which made them more destructive to each other and more formidable there-

after to the white races when black and white came into collision as the forces of civilization advanced northwards. Moreover, failing in the end to carry his ravages completely into the Lesuto mountains and annihilate all there as he had done elsewhere, he was content at the last to tolerate a certain friendly "understanding" between the Zulus and Basuto, a course which his successors secretly adopted and which continued unbroken down to the end of the reigns of Cetywayo and Lobengulu, with whom presents, including girls sent in marriage, were periodically exchanged. This "understanding," apparently unimportant, became nevertheless a distinct future menace to the white races who could never be certain when and how it might ripen.

We are indebted to the late Sir Theophilus Shepstone, who had an unrivalled knowledge of the subject, for valuable information in respect of Zulu history. According to that great authority the story of the rise of the Zulus to power under Tshaka runs, in brief, as follows.

Occupying the neighbourhood of the Black and White Umfolozi rivers in Zululand was a prominent tribe of considerable dimensions called the Umtetwa. The Zulus were a tribe of less importance tributary to the Umtetwa. The Umtetwa chief, Jobe, on the approach of old age, fearing dissensions after his death resolved to adjust the matter of succession by timely nomination of his heir. Of his two principal sons he appointed the elder, Tana, who was however not content to await his turn of chieftainship but con-

spired with his younger brother Godongwana to take their father's life. The old man on being apprized of the plot chafed with indignation and took secret measures to have both of his sons put to death, his anger against the younger being intensified in the belief that he was the instigator and would be the more dangerous if at large. Thereupon he caused the hut in which the boys slept to be surrounded at night by ruffians charged with peremptory orders to butcher every person inside, particularly the younger son. Including Tana, the elder, all were assegaied except Godongwana, the younger, who, rushing the doorway and leaping the outer fence, eluded the murderers but not without receiving a terrible wound in the back from a double-barbed assegai. Concealing himself in the bush he avoided capture in a marvellous way and was discovered next day by a faithful sister who, after extracting the assegai and feeding him, aided his escape by disguise and other desperate hazards.

Sir Theophilus Shepstone ascribes the date of this escape approximately to the year 1790 and attributes to it many of the changes in habits, condition and destiny of the Kaffir tribes south of the Zambesi.

Surviving miraculous adventures, badly wounded and friendless, Godongwana passed from tribe to tribe until he reached the far south where he found the white people from whom he learnt the art of combination in warfare and other devices. Hearing after about ten years of the death of his father Jobe he fearlessly returned to the tribe and claimed the chieftainship, the scar upon his back serving to identify him

where doubt existed. His impressive entry riding upon a horse, an animal then unknown, together with his daring and presence fascinated the people who at once acclaimed him. The reigning chief with his immediate adherents fled but was overtaken and killed as well as others who ventured upon opposition. Thus, Godongwana won back the Umtetwa chieftainship which he retained for many years under the new name of Dingiswayo, meaning "He who was caused to wander," conferred upon him in celebration of his valour and exploits.

Dingiswayo, upon finding himself firmly established, gave effect to his ambitious designs by immediately founding the martial system which he had studied from the whites. But he was to have no monopoly of it. The surrounding tribes caught the infection and as a measure of protection and preservation adopted a similar organization.

At this time the name of the Zulu chief, who owed allegiance to the Umtetwas, was Senzangakona. He had an illegitimate son, Tshaka, a youth of energy and promise who, having roused the jealousy and hostility of the legitimate members of the family, was compelled to flee with his mother and take refuge with Dingiswayo into whose military service the boy promptly entered about the year 1805 and immediately won his way to distinction. After serving long enough to acquaint himself with the merits of the new military system and the defects, as he thought, of Dingiswayo's lenient policy, it was his fortune, though not in the true line of succession, to be appointed Chief of the Zulus in succession to his father Senzangakona who

died about 1810, and was celebrated as being also the father of Dingaan and Panda.

He then, in alliance with Dingiswayo by whom he was already held in respect, carried on combined operations against other tribes, particularly against Zwide the most powerful local chieftain who had on one occasion been defeated and captured by Dingiswayo but magnanimously liberated. Later on the tables were turned; Zwide beat and captured Dingiswayo and would in the same generous spirit have spared the prisoner but for the intervention of his mother at whose instigation he was put to death; whereupon, his tribe, without a strong commander, were overcome after heavy loss and, being reduced to extremities, threw themselves under the protection of Tshaka who in this way became chief over both the Umtetwas and Zulus—a position to which he had been raised by the voice of the men-at-arms who delighted in dashing leaders.

Tshaka thus reinforced in numbers and influence commenced a series of aggressive movements having the effect of enlarging his fame and spreading the terror with which his name was associated. Unlike Dingiswayo whose policy it was, after inflicting defeat, to spare women and children and leave tribes behind him willing to recognize his paramountcy, Tshaka held to the view that entire extermination was as a rule the only practicable course—a course which he pursued relentlessly. He still had to reckon with his formidable neighbour Zwide by whom, taken unawares, he was viciously attacked, compelled to evacuate his country and followed up. His fate then hung in the

balance ; but he was equal to the occasion. Cleverly retrieving the disaster, he outgeneralled Zwide, struck and dispersed Zwide's army with such fury that what remained of it surrendered to take service in his Zulu regiments. This action removed the last check upon Tshaka's victorious career.

Of the wild and murderous excursions of this remarkable man, whose devastating operations extended from the great Fish River in Cape Colony to the Limpopo, his utter depopulation of some tribes and incorporation of others to augment his power, it is not possible here to dwell upon. He met a violent death in 1828 at the hands of his brother Dingaan by whom he was succeeded.

More than any other leader of the time he perfected the military organization of the warlike coast tribes. The short stabbing assegai was reserved for single combat at close quarters ; in its place long throwing assegais were introduced, capable by dexterous handling of being flung a considerable distance, the operators being screened by large hardened shields. The old style of desultory conflict was abandoned for new tactics consisting of the delivery of attack by massed regiments in a form designed to envelop the enemy, with reserves ready at hand to meet counter-attacks or push home a victory. Discipline of a severe character was maintained. Men were not allowed to marry without permission and that was not given until their regiments had in the opinion of the chief won glory that deserved reward. Acts of insubordination were punished by summary execution of the offenders. The result in general upon tribes under this system was



to form the entire manhood into a body of trained soldiers ready and eager to take the field, with war as their only occupation.

It is of importance to note before leaving Tshaka how widely his character differed from that of Moshesh previously referred to. Both chiefs attained great ascendancy and exercised a powerful influence upon the destiny of the native races of South Africa. Their methods were not, however, at all identical. The latter found his strength in homage accorded by followers whose respect he had gained and whose intellectual qualities he developed and utilized in their government. The former crushed every vestige of opposition and was a tyrant who neither sought advice nor tolerated compromise but enforced obedience to an iron will in such an effective manner as to dry up the springs from which progressive ideas flow. From this kind of rule he constructed a nation of magnificent warriors before whom English armies have since recoiled. Yet he left them in a condition of backwardness inclining even to retrogression, with a traditional legacy of savagery and violence which admitted of no motive for intellectual growth. In an able survey of the period, the historian Theale, summing up the character of Tshaka, says :—

“Tshaka governed his people with such cruelty as is hardly comprehensible to Europeans. Every one who displeased him in any way was put to death. All who approached him did so unarmed and in a crouching posture. He never admitted any woman to the rank of wife, though at his various places of

residence over twelve hundred females were maintained. His custom was to distribute to his favourite officers such of those women as he no longer cared for, when their places were supplied by captives. To prevent rivalry by members of his own family he allowed no son of his to live. And yet his people were devoted to him, so proud were they of the military fame which his genius enabled them to acquire."

The effect of Tshaka's operations was to drive from the latitude of his fury certain clans who though strong in numbers were unable to withstand the onslaught and, after suffering much loss, prudently retired; some fled to Natal to get protection from the British authorities; some to the Cape Colony, others to the north, and others again, prominently the Amangwane, with whom we are particularly concerned, followed one of the retreating waves to the westward and clung to the skirts of the Drakensberg mountains encircling Basutoland. In this course they tumbled upon and overwhelmed other tribes with the same ruthless vigour as that from which they were recoiling. A writer of acknowledged authority describing the savage procession of the Amangwane under their chief Matiwana quotes from the narrative of a missionary who soon afterwards visited the scene:—

"It is impossible to paint in colours sufficiently dark the atrocities committed by these cruel and bloodthirsty miscreants. Any one travelling along the mountains will find convincing proof in the burnt kralls and human skeletons on all sides of the desolating warfare

carried on by the people of Matiwana. There is an old man dwelling on the Bunting station who was for many years with Matiwana during his predatory mode of living who states that he himself saw upwards of thirty captains, whose people he had previously destroyed, brought before him and murdered in cold blood in order that he might drink their galls to make him strong. The people under these captains may at the lowest computation be reckoned as from three to four thousand to each captain. All these amounting to at least 100,000 souls were utterly destroyed by the bloody Matiwana."

The Amangwane upon being first attacked by Tshaka about the year 1819 were in their enforced retreat intercepted by the Amahlubi, then occupying the country between the Buffalo and Tugela rivers, whose power of resistance was unequal to the task with the result that they were badly beaten and fled before their adversaries, losing their chief Bungane and his eldest son Mtimkulu.

A section of the defeated Amahlubi under Umpanganzita a son of Bungane were led by the memory of an old feud to direct their flight right across the Maluti mountains in a swift expedition to exact vengeance. The story related is that, some little time before, Umpanganzita had quarrelled with his relative Motsholi who thereupon departed about the year 1820 with a considerable following and sought refuge with the Batlokoa then residing round the north-east spurs of the Drakensberg in what is now known as the Harrismith district.

Ma-Ntatisi, referred to in a previous chapter, was at the time acting for her minor son Sikonyela as Regent over the Batlokoa. Motsholi was hospitably received and well treated but was nevertheless suspicious of foul play and did not disguise his mistrust of the Batlokoa, showing it more especially by his refusal to partake of the food they presented him. This was an insult to the whole clan and it so roused Sikonyela, then a youth anxious to signalize his entrance to manhood by some notorious act, that with a band of young men who had been his associates in the school of circumcision rites, he stealthily fell upon Motsholi and murdered him, cutting off his head in order to obtain a much-coveted necklace charm forged in metal round his neck. This act of mutilation was in due course communicated to Umpanganzita who treasured up the injury and resolved upon some fitting opportunity to take satisfaction and recover the necklace. In pursuance of this resolve, after a rapid march through the mountains by paths from which his approach could not be detected, he made a sudden descent upon the Batlokoa who, taken by surprise, were roughly handled and driven in confusion towards the north-eastern Lesuto frontier.

The general position was then, that a running fight raged between the fierce Amangwane under Matiwana and the retreating Amahlubi who had in turn fallen upon the Batlokoa : the torch of war was in fact lighted so effectually as to involve every tribe living round the entire borders of Basutoland. This prolonged death struggle, resulting from all accounts in the destruction of hundreds of thousands, gradually trended towards

the mountain localities where Moshesh, with his nation in the forming, found it necessary to open his doors to refugees and to defend himself against a host of strange enemies who turned on him at intervals. Though the odds were many, that chief made a gallant stand. He must however have given way but that the most powerful of the marauding forces were diverted. The Amahlubi under Umpanganzita, driven to a last stand, and the Amangwane under Matiwana engaged furiously in a great battle in the valley of the north Caledon which resulted in the absolute defeat and death of Umpanganzita. The victorious Amangwane were then attacked by an army of Tshaka's and vanquished. Their chief Matiwana after raiding in and being expelled from the Cape Colony, and other vicissitudes, returned eventually to Zululand with a small following, intending to offer submission to Tshaka. That chief had meanwhile been assassinated and his successor Dingaan, while affecting to receive the refugee kindly, had him put to death.

In this way Moshesh was delivered unexpectedly about the year 1824 from a swarm of invaders, set in motion by Tshaka, who must otherwise have crushed him between them. A considerable number of the Amangwane and Amahlubi after their exhausting struggles with each other, finding themselves cut off, were content to suffer incorporation by the Basuto and represent in that country to-day that distinct and fairly numerous section known as Fingoes who still cling to the Zulu language and habits.

There still remained the Batlokoa who, in spite of having been hunted away from their various settle-

ments, were still restless and formidable. With them Moshesh had immediately to deal. Led by Ma-Ntatisi and Sikonyela operating from stronghold bases in the upper reaches of the Caledon river, they laid siege to Moshesh in his fortress at Butha Buthe with such vigour that he was compelled to abandon the position and retreat over the hills to Thaba Bosigo, an eminence of great strength lying under the shadow of Mount Machache—so impregnable indeed that, though resolutely attacked in later years by various forces white and black, it was never wrested from the Basuto chiefs whose future home and burial-place it was to be. In the retreat the people of Moshesh endured great hardships, losing most of their property; it was on this occasion that his grandfather Pete met his death at the hands of cannibals. Things might have been worse but that Moselekatse, a chief who had broken away from the Zulus, attacked the Batlokoa savagely in rear and drew them off from the retiring Basutos.

The name of Moselekatse suggests a passing note, for it was he who founded the Matebele nation after he had ravaged a great portion of central South Africa exterminating vast numbers of the docile people of the plains. The son of an independent chief named Matshobane who fell under the Zulu domination, he at once attracted, on account of his fine physique and daring, the attention of Tshaka by whom he was entrusted with the command of an army corps. Having won the attachment of his warriors by a series of successful exploits he became arrogant and in that frame of mind ventured on one occasion to appropriate spoil which should have gone to his superior. There-



From a drawing by Capt. Harris in 1839.

MOSELEKATSE, KING OF THE MATABELE.





upon Tshaka, enraged at the man's ambition and the insult from his inferior, despatched an army to annihilate him and his adherents; but Moselekatse, warned of the danger, fled northwards laying waste the whole country he traversed, evidence of which is to be seen to this day in thousands of krall ruins between the Vaal and Limpopo rivers. Up till 1831 he terrorized an immense tract killing off many thousands who had escaped from the Amangwane, sparing none. He cast his eyes upon the Basuto mountain fastnesses with the idea possibly of securing himself there from the vengeance of Tshaka; but his army, thwarted by want of provisions and the tactics of the sturdy mountaineers, failed to take Thaba Bosigo by storm. Moshesh humoured him by sending presents of food and peaceful messages which so pleased him that he exchanged salutations and swerved off to the westward devastating en route the whole area up to the Kalahari where he held despotic sway until 1837 when the Emigrant Boers after several bloody encounters hurled him precipitously over the Limpopo. There, after a reign of terror, he established the Matabele kingdom and was succeeded in 1870 by Lobengulu of recent history.

In the report published in 1836 of an expedition sent by the Cape Colonial Government to explore in the year 1834 what was then called Central Africa, the Superintendent after an interview with Moshesh described the methods of Basuto defence as follows:—

“As soon as it was evident that the tribes hurled upon the Basuto by the wars of Tshaka were too

powerful for them upon the plains they retreated to the hills whose flattened tops render them not inconvenient residences, whilst their precipitous sides constitute natural fortresses of such strength as to enable a mere handful of men to defend them against a powerful enemy. To the few points at which these can be assailed all fly on the approach of danger and, from the piles of stones which are purposely collected there, each individual supplies himself with one of such a weight as he is able to manage, and those they hurl with dreadful effect upon the advancing foes. By this simple plan they have for years been able to maintain their position and even to set at defiance the practised warriors of Moselekatse and Tshaka.”

The general condition of the people at the end of this phase was one of extreme misery. Lands had gone out of cultivation ; scarcely any villages remained except those screened from view under rocky ledges dangerous of approach, and the surviving population dwelt in a state of expectant attack. The destitution and stress caused by the manner in which they had been hunted about produced one most unhappy result in particular. When in desperate circumstances and threatened by hunger, they were betrayed into the fatal resource of tasting human flesh. This led to a certain section of them becoming cannibals. The habit seems to have originated in Natal, for Sir Theophilus Shepstone writing upon the subject said :—

“ The country became filled with small parties of starving and desperate men ; there was but one step to

cannibalism, and this was soon taken by a man named Umdava, who conceived the idea of eating human flesh, and a considerable band soon gathered round him : his example was followed by others, until the fragments of four tribes had become cannibals : they hunted for human beings as men do for game and became a far more terrible scourge to the country than Tshaka's armies. I have myself conversed with several men who escaped after having been captured by these 'man-eaters,' and after having been told off to furnish the next feast of their captors ; and with one, a chief still living in this Colony, who was compelled to carry the vessel in which he was told he would himself be cooked ; the scene of his escape is not five miles from the spot on which this paper is written, and at present forms part of the episcopal property held by the Bishop of Natal."

## CHAPTER VI

Moshesh has a respite and turns it to account: the introduction of Missionaries: how it was accomplished and some reminiscences

1832—1835

**G**RIMLY the chief Moshesh, like an old Baron of the feudal ages, fortified and held the barriers to his stronghold at Thaba Bosigo where we find him permanently established in 1832. He had been enabled there for a short space to survey the movements of his enemies, showering missiles, in the absence of firearms, upon the bloodthirsty Zulu and Matabele invaders and while not defeating them had driven them off. Tshaka had fallen by an assassin's hand; Moselekatse was gone never to return. Enemies there were still, but no desperate chiefs near who were eager enough to venture upon mountain expeditions against hidden foes.

Meanwhile, fragments continued to filter in to swell his numbers. At intervals, predatory bands of Griquas and Korannas mounted on horses, of which the Basuto had as yet scarcely any, and armed with guns descended unexpectedly upon the Lesuto, raiding, robbing, murdering and returning to their lairs along

the lower Orange River. But at times they were met and reversed until finally they got entangled with the Boer emigrants pushing up from the Cape Colony by whom they were cut off and silenced. The Batlokoa and other disturbing elements were content for the moment to suspend open hostilities whilst they seized upon derelict lands for cultivation of maize and millet required for sustenance. Cannibalism though still rife to a certain degree was repulsive to many. Some cattle remained but not for slaughter, being regarded as national wealth—the means of exchange and barter, in marriage particularly. The Basuto were thankful for a truce which would allow them to till the ground and get green food again.

Unperturbed by the dangers he had passed through and which for all he knew of outside affairs might recur, Moshesh viewed the respite with satisfaction as affording him the opportunity to gather round him in council his crowd of miscellaneous tribesmen. Composed as it was of many who had but recently engaged in deadly conflict with each other, it is hard to realize the existence of unanimity between them. But they now had one cause in common, viz. mutual protection, and that led more than anything to a burial of the hatchet.

The chief considered it a favourable moment to make proposals which he felt assured would not meet with universal approval; they were indeed opposed by certain members of his own family and by some of his vassals. But he clung to his purpose and determined upon a course which appealed strongly to his imagination and which as it happened was

destined to exercise a supreme influence over the fate of the Basuto nation. That was, the introduction of white missionaries.

For some considerable time he had been hearing from native wanderers from the west of the work of Moffat and other agents of the London Missionary Society ; of their wisdom and kindness, their capacity to prevail over savage game by the aid of new weapons in the form of firearms, and of their magical skill in the use of potent medicines known only to themselves. These reports fascinated him so much that he resolved if possible to have a missionary of his own.

It so happened that a half-caste by name Adam Krotz, a Christian convert living on the lower Orange River, in pursuing his calling as a hunter amongst the hordes of game then frequenting the Orange Free State, wandered on one occasion close to the Basutoland frontier where he was visited by two men who begged him to go and see their chief. He did so and found himself in the presence of Moshesh by whom he was received courteously. What passed at the interview is best related in the exact words of Krotz :—

“Moshesh told me that for several years he had been the victim of incessant attacks by which three-quarters of his subjects had been destroyed or dispersed. He had asked me there to know if I could give him any good advice, if I could show him any means of securing peace for the country. I thought at once of the missionaries ; I spoke to him about Moffat and about our own men. I tried to make him understand



Photo by T. Lindsay Fairclough.

FALLS ON THE TSUNYANE, LERIBE.





the services which such men could render him. The idea of having near him permanently wise men, friends of peace, disposed to do all in their power to aid him in his distress, pleased him greatly. He wanted to have some at once. 'Do you know any,' said he to me, 'who would be disposed to come?' I replied that such men sometimes came our way. 'Oh! I beseech you tell the first you meet to hasten here. I will give them the best possible welcome. I will do everything they advise me to do.' Shortly after my return home I found that he, in doubt whether I should have the means of fulfilling my promise, had sent me two hundred cattle in order that I might *procure him in exchange at least one missionary*. But the cattle had been intercepted en route by the Korannas."

Though Krotz failed to get the cattle to pay for missionaries he did not forget his promise, becoming eventually the medium by which they were to hear of the chief's desire and be attracted to the Lesuto for settlement. He chanced to meet at Philippolis three members of the Paris Evangelical Society lately arrived in South Africa from France, to whom he repeated what had transpired between himself and Moshesh and promptly offered to serve them as guide and introducer. These three members, viz. Messieurs Casalis, Arbousset and Gossellin, had not then been dedicated to any definite sphere nor had determined the final locality to which their ministrations should be directed. They were inclined at first to regard the statements of Krotz as a romantic dream; but his pertinacity, coupled with the offer to accompany them, at length persuaded them

that Providence had distinctly called to them. They started accordingly for the Basuto country in June 1833.

The memoirs of M. Casalis are rich in description of the interesting and adventurous journey to a land where Europeans were for the first time leaving the imprint of their footsteps. They relate that, after a wearisome trek across flats for some days due north of Philippolis, they came to the first great gateway in the road to their mountain destination, viz. a pass between the forbidding hills at Thaba-nchu (Black Mountain), then occupied by a petty chief named Moseme tributary to Moshesh. According to orders, he showed suspicion to the strangers but after a long parley permitted them to view from his village on the summit the panorama it gave of the country intervening from the border, a distance of fifty miles, beyond which were to be seen the snow-topped peaks separating Basutoland from Natal.

They were struck by the agreeable appearance of the people met with (the Baralongs had not yet arrived), who are described as soft of skin, bronze rather than black in colour, dignified in bearing, graceful of movement and courteous in address. Human bones were found lying about everywhere and there were plain indications of massacres and devastation.

Arrived at the Caledon river, to be crossed by wagons with difficulty only after strenuous operations, they were greeted by a noisy cavalcade led by the two senior sons of Moshesh, Letsie and Molapo, riding bareback upon horses captured from the Korannas in a recent encounter. It was according to custom

deemed advisable to at once respond to this greeting by leaving the wagons and proceeding on horseback to the great chief's residence on the crest of Thaba Bosigo. En route, the heads of villages saluted them, whether in a friendly manner or not is doubtful, as the "foreigners of Moshesh."

They were received cordially by Moshesh, a description of whom at this meeting is given in a previous chapter, with the words "Welcome, white men." Then, having conducted them through a throng of people and a maze of mud huts surrounding an open space where for safety the cattle were penned at night, he introduced them to his chief wife Mamohato and his thirty or forty junior wives. The narrative of M. Casalis, full of incident and characteristic features, leading up to the final understanding with Moshesh and the search for a site, shall here speak for itself in the following extracts :—

"Mamohato received me in the manner customary with the housewives of the country seated before a fire in the midst of the palisaded court surrounding her hut. . . . Each of the other wives of the chief had her household apart. A sign was made to me to seat myself on a mat. A pot of milk, a loaf of sargho of the size and form of a cannon-ball were then placed before me. . . . As I hesitated to eat they understood the cause of my embarrassment and fetched me a horn spoon. . . . As soon as I could do it from conviction and with a reason for it I hastened to utter the word *Monate*, 'good,' and my hosts smilingly repeated it after me.

“Krotz soon came to inform me that our wagons had arrived at the foot of the mountain. I therefore took leave. . . . Moshesh was not long in coming to see us. He greatly admired a little tent we had pitched (the first he had seen) and retired after ordering some provisions to be sent to us, evidently touched with the interest we seemed to show in him. . . . One thing astonished us. It was to be shivering with cold in this Africa which we had expected to find everywhere parched and burning—we were in the middle of winter—at an elevation of five thousand feet above sea level. It snowed during the two or three days following our arrival. . . . The natives at such times are with difficulty persuaded to come out of their huts. . . .

“Spite of our complete ignorance of the culinary art and of the poverty of our larder, we had the hardihood to invite Moshesh to dinner. The repast consisted of hashed mutton with pumpkin and several bowls of coffee. The colour of this beverage seemed at first somewhat repulsive to our guest, but we succeeded in making it delicious by putting into it some handfuls of raw sugar. He inquired very particularly as to the source of this priceless sand the taste of which was better than honey. Great was his surprise when he learnt that we made it out of a plant resembling the sweet sarghos which he and his people daily sucked. I remember that we sent to our venerated directors in Paris a description of this dinner. . . . We had the coolness to inform them that the King received his portion on the saucepan lid. What a way of treating . . . one of the most distinguished chiefs!

We forgot to add that we had not such a thing as a plate, and that we ourselves ate together out of the saucepan itself.

“The moment came for explaining the object of our arrival and we did it after this memorable dinner.

“‘Here,’ said Adam Krotz, ‘are the men whom I promised you ; it is for them to explain their plans and arrange matters with you.’ To this Moshesh replied by warm acknowledgments. We said how greatly we had been moved by the description which had been given us of the misfortunes of the Basuto and of their present sad position. . . . We believed that we had for all these evils a sovereign remedy. . . . If Moshesh and his people consented to place themselves with us under the care and direction of God we had the most perfect assurance that He would undertake to make the incursions of their enemies cease and to create in the country a new order of belief and of manners which would secure tranquillity, order and abundance.

“In order to prove to our new friends the firmness of our convictions on this subject and the purity of our intentions we offered to establish ourselves definitely in their midst, and to share their lot, whatever it might be. . . .

“‘My heart is white with joy,’ replied the chief ; ‘your words are great and good. It is enough for me to see your clothing, your arms and the rolling houses (wagons) in which you travel, to understand how much intelligence and strength you have. You see our desolation. This country was full of inhabitants. Wars have devastated it. Multitudes have

perished ; others are refugees in foreign lands. I remain almost alone on this rock. I have been told that you can help us. You promise to do it. That is enough. It is all I want to know. Remain with us. You shall instruct us. We will do all you wish. The country is at your disposal. We can go through it together and you shall choose the place which will best suit you.'

"The mass of the people were . . . absorbed in studying us. . . . If we happened to turn sharply round, or seemed as though we were about to approach them, the whole crowd rushed away with loud cries. . . . The men were not free from similar emotions but they made it a point of honour to conceal them. We found that these poor people had difficulty to believe that we were really men . . . not ghosts. . . . It was a great consolation for all parties when . . . we encouraged the bolder spirits to make an examination and thus reassure themselves. It was then discovered that our hair, spite of its resemblance to that of baboons, was real hair, that our boots and stockings covered toes, and that my spectacles did not form part of my physical structure. By seeing us eat and drink, it became evident to them that this act was accompanied by the same sensations with us as with other mortals. They learned with pleasure that we had fathers and mothers. Why had we not wives? To this our interpreter quietly replied that it was because we were as yet too young : that white men married late.

"After some days of waiting, everything was ready for the projected excursion. A great lover of venison,

the chief profited by the slowness of our march to bring down a good many specimens of big game. He threw the javelin with astonishing precision and power. We saw moreover that in this country, as well as in the forests of St. Germain and of Compiègne, the beaters knew how to arrange easy shots for royal hands.

“After a long search our choice finally fastened on a spot which appeared to us to offer all the advantages we sought: abundant water, fertile land, wood for building huts and firing, as well as charming scenery. It was some twenty miles from Thaba Bosigo at the entrance of a deep valley stretching away to the foot of one of the most remarkable peaks of the Malutis. This locality which war had caused to be deserted bore the name of Makhoarane. We gave it that of Moriah, in remembrance of the difficulties through which we had passed and of the providential guidance which had brought us thus far—the 9th July 1833.”

The introduction by Moshesh of these missionaries was part of a well-considered scheme. At heart no doubt he loved the wild habits and customs of his people, even their quaint superstitions, from all of which he never shook himself entirely free; for, although late in life he accepted Christianity, his best friends never went so far as to believe that he fervently adopted it. That he earnestly desired to preserve his country and elevate his people there is no question. He knew however from constant reports of the conflicts between kaffirs and whites in the Cape Colony that the tide of European advance was set in his

direction and must in due time be reckoned with. His natural shrewdness therefore dictated to him that, whilst the admission of missionaries might be dangerous as a precedent for white occupation, there were counter-advantages to be gained in the education of his children and in the advice and protection he would receive against activities, perhaps oppression, with which he alone could never effectively cope.

How his far-sightedness and sound reasoning were justified appeared later on when the influence of resident missionaries was successfully exerted in complicated matters of state involving negotiations with the British and Boer governments which had to be conducted on behalf of the Basuto by means of letters, petitions and personal conferences. Not infrequently, blame was imputed to them for their partial attitude. The records show however that in all their correspondence they were animated only by a high sense of duty to the people they were serving.

In a later chapter, questions relating to missions and missionary effort will be dealt with. But this seems to be a suitable place for the insertion of a few notes illustrative of the time, viz. 1833, in respect of the wild fauna then abounding, and a few refreshing stories of experiences with lions quoted from the narrative of M. Casalis.

“There were innumerable multitudes of springboks, blesboks, gnus; less numerous hordes of elands, rheboks and rietboks . . . everywhere immense troops of quaggas. . . . The hyena has received a reputation which he does not merit . . . we have met four or



five of them together under a tree in full daylight and have put them to flight by a single shot. . . . As to the lion, I have found him prosaic, although there is some discount to be taken off the legendary account of his bravery. . . .

“Here are two well-authenticated facts which show how he (the lion) in his relations with the human species will commit at times singular blunders. A Boer was travelling with his wife and children . . . one clear moonlight night. The good man was astonished to see shadowed on the thick canvas which closed the entrance of the wagon the outline of a lion seated on his haunches. . . . He had found it convenient to install himself on the driver’s seat. . . . The Boer picked up his rifle, placed the end of it close to the ear of the too confident beast and blew out his brains.

“Another incident happened in the Basuto country shortly after our arrival. The natives make a courtyard round their hut by a palisade of reeds. The entrance is by a narrow winding passage . . . a lion took it into his head one fine morning to penetrate into one of these enclosures. A man and his wife were within squatting before the fire. . . . The man, without giving the strange visitor time to recover himself, leaped on his back astride as on a horse, telling his wife to take a javelin and plunge it into the animal’s side. The thing was done in a moment without any kind of struggle. Nothing remained except to call the neighbours to come and see.

“The carrying off of one of the wives of Moshesh by a lion was one of the most frightful episodes . . .

it was midnight and very dark when the lion had leaped upon her. Moshesh and a number of his men . . . armed themselves as for a battle and advanced in close order. The lion, finding himself hard pressed, dropped his victim . . . and uttering a frightful roar threw himself upon the band who immediately took to flight. A moment after, the cries of the woman recommenced ; the animal had once more seized her in his jaws and was making off with her. There was a rally, a fresh attack, a fresh rout, renewed cries from the poor victim who, after a moment of respite, felt herself once more in that terrible grip. This scene was repeated six or eight times over a course of five miles, the woman's cries being fainter and fainter. . . . The next day, they found only a few half-crunched bones.

“We were approaching one of the ill-looking defiles . . . when I saw something coming towards us apparently in rational manner, with none of those suspicious movements which indicate the presence of evil passions. Oh, joy! it was a dog. . . . He was of russet colour, of good size, with a well-fed appearance. He was travelling with an air of quiet assurance, as of an animal that knew its way. . . . Unfortunately he was going in a contrary direction from that which a confused remembrance counselled me to take. He hardly paid any attention to us. . . . Hastily repeating the proper names most in use at the Cape amongst the canine tribe, I tried to stop this most respectable animal. It was lost labour. . . . Some instants afterwards, what should I see but a monstrous head which appeared in a thicket of mimosas and an entire animal disengaged itself from the brushwood. It was as to

size like a small pony. My spectacles did not allow of my distinguishing the outline in detail, but the whole appearance awakened in me certain recollections of the menagerie which were anything but agreeable, to wit a mane, a bearing assured and menacing, and a tail ceaselessly lashing the hollow flanks. Without doubt it was a lion and of a large size. What was I to do? . . . Having no weapons, any idea of resistance was out of the question. . . . I looked fixedly at the monster, but still without seeing him distinctly. There was nevertheless in his attitude something that seemed to betray uneasiness: a brusque movement forward, followed by a recoil and stampings, apparently of inquietude rather than of anger. I do not recollect now of which eye my horse was blind, but he went on as if he saw nothing. Thanks to the steadiness of his trot, I soon found myself at a reassuring distance. . . . 'That's enough for one day in the way of a fright,' I said to myself. . . . 'I have had the honour of exchanging looks with a lion in full daylight and in his own domains.'"

## CHAPTER VII

Moshesh is perplexed by the approach of the Emigrant Farmers and appeals to the Governor of Cape Colony with whom he makes a Treaty: sends three of his sons to school at the Cape

1835—1843

**D**URING a space of comparative quiet now intervening Moshesh began to observe and experience pressure upon his country from various sides.

Descended from an ancient Bechuana chief named Morolong, one Moroko, head of a large section of the Baralong tribe, escaped some years earlier from the clutches of Moselekatse to find temporary refuge along the banks of the Vaal River. Whilst there he was visited by certain members of the Wesleyan Missionary Society who, despairing of success so long as they were liable to continual harassment by predatory parties, decided to abandon the locality where they had for a few years carried on their labours and came to an understanding with Moroko to migrate with them. Thereupon the tribe, under the guidance of these Wesleyan missionaries, viz. Messrs. Archbell, Jenkins, Edwards, Allison and Sephton, wended



Photo by T. Lindsay Fairclough.

CAVE DWELLINGS, LERIBE.



its way at the close of 1833 to Thaba Nchu where they were received and apportioned the belt of land contiguous to the Modder River and its affluents, by the petty chief Moseme, afore-mentioned, acting in the name of Moshesh whose acknowledged tributary he was. Under the same auspices other small tribes immigrated to the locality, viz. Korannas under Jan Kaptein (succeeded by Gert Taaibosch), half-castes under Carolus Baatje, Griquas under Barend Barends (succeeded by Peter Davids).

These various people on arrival at once communicated with Moshesh who, believing himself to be paramount over the country in question, welcomed rather than resented this peaceful invasion. He granted abundant lands for missionary purposes and acquiesced in settlement of the immigrants upon the understanding that his supremacy in matters relative to the soil and general welfare was recognized. Peace-offerings and presents were exchanged in acknowledgment of this understanding which afterwards took the form of a written agreement with the Wesleyan Society signed by Moshesh in 1834 under what he, being unable to read or write, afterwards alleged to be an entire misapprehension of the facts of the case upon which his consent to do so was given. For instance he repudiated, not apparently without justice, the astounding construction that he had assented to cede absolutely several hundred square miles in exchange for 8 head of cattle, 34 sheep and 5 goats. Yet the indentures he was led to sign bore clearly that interpretation.

In a similar way the Bataung under Moletsane,

driven in the great upheaval to the Orange River, were encouraged to settle at Mekuatleng near the present town of Ladybrand with the consent of Moshesh who held them to be in closer affinity to the Basuto than any other Bechuana tribe in respect of manners, customs and idiom.

Parties of white men, pioneers of the great trek from the Cape Colony, also found their way to the Basuto frontier in pursuit of game and pasture, remaining at first for short periods only. They were not disturbed ; but as time went on their visits became so prolonged as to assume the appearance of permanent settlement. In a Memorandum written at the dictation of Moshesh covering the affairs of the time he states that he regarded all these visitors as tenants to whom he had assigned resting-places without waiving his right and title to over-lordship. The emigrant Boers, however, aware that no defined territorial boundaries existed, claimed as of right the ground upon which they had fastened, on the plea that, being derelict, it was theirs by virtue of occupation.

Moshesh looked upon Moroko and the other chiefs as vassals, calling them to national assemblies and allowing them the management of their own private affairs. They were satisfied in their own minds with this convenient system. But it was not so with the white settlers, whose influx created new problems which were to introduce relations of a discordant character between the Chief and the Cape Colonial Government to whom the Boers appealed for support. As a result of that appeal, Moshesh was drawn into direct communication with the Governor and frontier officials of



the Cape Colony, and we are furnished in the official records with a dramatic correspondence extending over many years.

Useful relations existed between the Chief and his new native tributaries for the next few years. He afforded them loyal assistance in their troubles, aiding Moroko in 1836 when attacked by Korannas and Kaffirs, and intervening at some sacrifice to patch up serious disputes between the Mantatis (a new name for the Batlokoa) under Sikonyela and the Griquas and Bastards. Moreover, he assisted the Griquas under Peter Davids who in his flight from an inroad of the Matabele lost a daughter, a nephew, two wagons and other valuable property.

About that time Basutoland was visited by the Cape expedition for exploring Central Africa under Dr. A. Smith. That traveller in his report published in 1836 wrote of his meeting with Moshesh:—

“A very trifling degree of physiognomic knowledge was required to generate the most favourable impressions as to this individual, and all of his proceedings whilst we were in his country went to justify the high opinion formed of him at first sight.”

The years 1836–7 witnessed the great Boer exodus from the Cape Colony in various directions through native territory, throwing the whole country into a commotion that reached Basutoland.

In June of the latter year we find the first recorded communication addressed to the Civil Commissioner of Colesberg by the French missionary Rolland (of Beersheba, a station on the banks of the Caledon) who

protests against the lawless conduct of certain Boer farmers and their forcible seizure and removal for slavery of native children from the mission station. This was followed by Moshesh's first letter to Lieut.-Governor Stockenstrom introducing his messenger and vassal Moirosi, the bearer of words of peace and goodwill.

In November 1839 Moshesh formulates by letter to the Lieut.-Governor a complaint to the effect that a number of farmers had settled near him without leave ; that he had acquainted them they might remain grazing their flocks on condition of recognizing his authority over the ground, which however they refused to do ; that certain trek farmers Joubert and Peters with 25 armed men had violated his country in pursuit of two native convict refugees from the Cape Colony, accused further of cattle stealing, who on being delivered up in good faith by the Chief for surrender to justice were immediately shot in cold blood. "Both were killed on my ground and near villages belonging to me. Now, your Honour will readily understand that by such an unwarrantable act of self-revenge they have brought me into difficulties with the nation to whom the two men belonged. . . . If the farmers assume the right of acting as judges and executioners in my territories, the security of my people is at once in danger."

This temperate letter illustrative of Moshesh's strong sense of equity was covered by a letter from Mr. Rolland in which he alluded to the hostile attitude of the Boers in question, who neither acknowledged the Colonial Government nor that of the tribes amongst

whom they dwelt, and solicited either the withdrawal of the persons complained of or the establishment of a magistrate in the locality endowed with power to maintain peace and order ; otherwise, the natives could not understand why subjects of the English Government were allowed to conduct themselves in a manner calculated to result in retaliation and other evil consequences.

To these communications the Lieut.-Governor replied on December 18, 1839 :—

“That the persons alluded to have departed from the Colony without the knowledge or sanction of Government and have placed themselves in a position where the Colonial laws cannot reach them ; but, having entered and settled themselves in the territories of the Chief Moshesh, they are of course subject to the laws of that Chief and must expect to incur the penalty of any acts of cruelty or murder they may commit . . . during their residence in his territory.”

The policy indicated in this letter was probably the only one possible of adoption by the Cape Government, for it was powerless to follow the Emigrant Boers in their wanderings to the interior or to control their actions beyond the defined judicial limits of the Colony. But it placed a grave responsibility upon Moshesh by inviting him to exact redress according to native law for offences committed by white men—a course he was naturally reluctant to follow lest it drew upon him the wrathful indignation of the white races as a whole, for he felt certain that his people were not competent to administer justice where whites were concerned, and he

knew that the attempt to do so would not long be tolerated.

The Chief in fact gauged the situation correctly. It appeared to him however to be so serious as complications with the Dutch settlers increased in number and gravity that he was moved to take the important step of addressing an appeal to the Crown for protection, apprehending that the existence and independence of the Basuto could be maintained only if the English nation, whose generous treatment of natives was well known, would take them under its shield. The appeal, as follows, written in French by one of the missionaries, is an historical document of great interest as being the herald of negotiations leading up to the constitution of British rule in Basutoland.

“THABA BOSIGO,

“ 30 *May*, 1842.

“ MONSIEUR LE LIEUT.-GOUVERNEUR,

“ Moshesh, Chef de la tribu des Basutos, me prie d'écrire en son nom à votre Excellence pour vous exprimer le désir qu'il éprouve de rendre ses rapports avec le gouvernement Colonial plus réguliers et plus intimes qu'ils ne l'ont été jusqu'ici. Il a observé avec le plus grand intérêt le développement du système généreux que la nation anglaise a adopté en faveur des tribus que l'extension de ses territoires met en contact avec elle. Il se convainc de plus en plus qu'il n'y a d'existence et d'indépendance possible pour son peuple que sous l'égide protectrice du Souverain que vous représentez. Sa requête est que vous veuillez bien vous intéresser en sa faveur et lui faire savoir s'il entre dans vos vues de reconnaître officiellement la

## Moshesh Appeals to the Cape Governor 69

tribu des Basutos et qu'elles seraient la nature et les bases du traité que votre Excellence jugerait être le mieux adapté aux besoins de la dite tribu et aux intérêts de la Colonie.”

The prayer was endorsed by memorials from the French missionaries and Dr. Philip, superintendent at Cape Town of the London Missionary Society, who were at pains to explain all the facts and outline the dangers of allowing matters to drift.

Governor Sir George Napier lost no time in taking such action as lay in his power. He first issued a Proclamation in September 1842 warning the Emigrant Farmers against encroachment upon the possessions of certain native tribes and making known that :—

“Her Majesty’s Government will regard with . . . indignation any attempt upon the part of any of her subjects to molest, invade or injure any of the native tribes or to take . . . unlawful possession of any of the lands to those tribes belonging : that by any such attempt the offending parties will forfeit all claim to Her Majesty’s protection . . . and be held to have placed themselves in an attitude of resistance to her . . . authority, and will . . . expose themselves to the penal consequences which may . . . attend upon any criminal acts committed. . . .”

In forwarding a copy of the Proclamation to Lord Stanley, then Secretary of State for the Colonies, the Governor, after alluding to the desire of the Emigrants to possess themselves of the territory of Moshesh, concluded his despatch :—

“I question much whether the Proclamation will have any other effect than to make them pause for a time and thus postpone their ulterior projects. The two modes of overcoming the difficulties of the case are either by extending the protection of the Government by means of treaties with the native chiefs and the promise of armed support in giving effect to those treaties or by spreading our influence over the whole of that country by subjecting both the natives and the Emigrants to British law and authority.”

A few months later Sir George Napier, in his capacity as Governor of the Cape Colony, entered into a Treaty with Moshesh in the following terms :—

“1. The Chief of the Basutos engages to be the faithful friend and ally of the Colony.

“2. He engages to preserve order in his territory : to restrain and punish any attempt to violate the peace of the frontier of the Colony by any people living within his country, or by any people from the interior who may attempt to pass through the territory for that purpose ; and to seize and send back to the colonial authorities any criminals or fugitives from the colony.

“3. The territory of Moshesh is bounded from the west, from the junction of the Caledon with the Gariep (Orange) rivers to the sources of those rivers : on the south by the Gariep river from the junction aforesaid : on the north by a line extending from about 25 to 30 miles north of the Caledon river, excepting near to its source, and at its junction with the Gariep, where the lands of Bethulie and the territory of Sikonyela come close upon its northern bank.

“ 4. He also undertakes to assist the colonial authorities in any enterprise which they may find it necessary to undertake for the recovery of property, or the apprehending of banditti who, having been pursued from the Colony, may have taken refuge in any part of his country.

“ 5. And, generally, he engages to apprise the colonial authorities of any intended predatory or hostile attempt against the Colony which may come to his knowledge, and to co-operate cordially, and in all good faith with the Colonial Government, in preserving peace and extending civilization among the native tribes.”

In consequence of the above engagements, the Governor, upon his part, engages :—

“ To make the Chief a present from the Colonial Treasury of not less than £75 annually, either in money or in arms and ammunition, as the Chief may desire.

“ And in order to facilitate a due observance of these mutual engagements, and to secure the benefits which they are intended to afford to both parties, the Chief Moshesh will correspond direct with the Government on all subjects mutually concerning his territory and the Colony ; and he also engages to receive and protect any agent whom the Government, in course of time, may think necessary to appoint at his residence, and confidentially communicate with such agent upon all matters concerning his territory and the Colony.

“ The fifth day of October 1843.

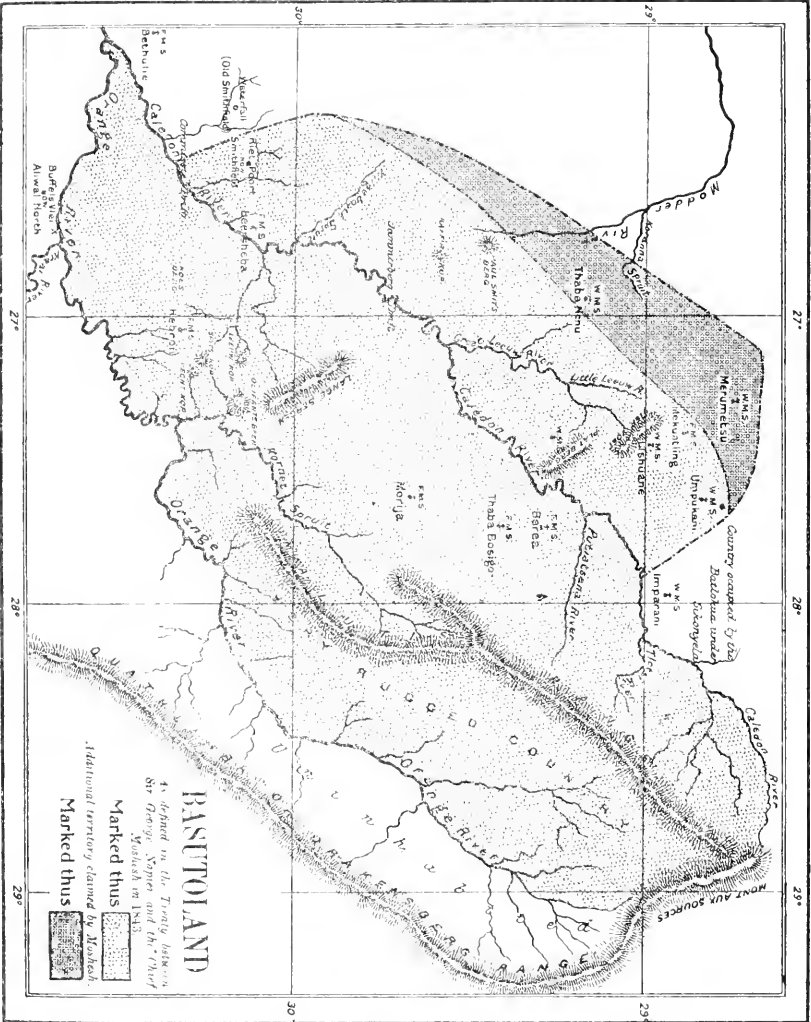
“ (Signed) GEORGE NAPIER.

“ Mark X of Moshesh.”

This Treaty, which was loosely drawn, was very one-sided and offered Moshesh little advantage beyond the recognition of his paramountcy. It required him to maintain police at his own cost and to perform magisterial, detective and other onerous duties for which he was to receive a pittance of £75. It entailed upon him the obligation to maintain order over a large area beyond his jurisdiction and to protect the Colonial frontier; but it failed to secure him that protection from Colonial subjects for which he had prayed. Moreover, the boundaries specified had not been previously surveyed or discussed and did not accord with those he claimed. Nevertheless, he signed it in good faith in order to manifest his anxiety to be on good terms with the Government, and on the same day protested by letter that he had done it subject to amendment of the boundary.

No sooner was the Treaty executed than remonstrances against it were lodged by the general superintendent of the Wesleyan missions at Thaba Nchu on behalf of the Baralongs, Griquas, Korannas and others who now, under inspiration, claimed to have treaties of their own and to be regarded as entirely independent of Moshesh from whom they had received favours and protection. All the records go to show this to have been an ungenerous proceeding. A contentious all-round correspondence ensued which in May 1844 the new Governor Sir Peregrine Maitland deliberated upon in consultation with his Executive Council at Cape Town. By them it was determined that the Colonial Government found it inexpedient to adjust disputed boundaries or to enter upon further Treaties with native chiefs.





**BASTO LAND**

As defined in the Treaty between  
 Sir George Napier and the Chief  
 Moshak in 1835.

Marked thus

Additional territory claimed by Moshak.

Marked thus





Thus matters remained for a time. Meanwhile, Moshesh took another important step in 1844 by sending three of his sons to the Governor for education, requesting that they might be afforded the opportunity of acquiring the English language and gaining an insight in the manners and laws of the English nation. It was a confiding act to banish his sons to the care of strangers. He took advantage of the occasion to write that the tribe was surrounded by Boers to whom it was equally dangerous to yield or to resist. Although they had been suffered, according to native custom, to let their cattle graze on certain parts of his territory, it was not without their being warned not to construe an act of mere sufferance into a right.

The net was spreading fast round the Lesuto, so fast indeed that the Chief was urged to repeat an application for a Government representative to reside with him provided the choice fell upon a person capable of sympathizing with the tribe.

## CHAPTER VIII

It is good discretion not to make too much of any man at first, because one cannot hold out that proportion.

BACON.

**Moshesh is drawn into the entanglements of British policy directed by Sir Henry Pottinger and Sir Harry Smith: is abused by one and praised by the other: the Queen's Sovereignty is proclaimed**

1844—1847

**G**OVERNOR SIR PEREGRINE MAITLAND now found himself in an awkward dilemma. Despatches from England made it clear that Her Majesty's Government were not unwilling to be praised for their "pious resolution" to protect the native States but at the same time "cannot be held responsible either for the conduct or protection of such of her white subjects as thought fit to migrate into the interior." Still, as the man on the spot, he had to move with the times regardless of the fact that one of his recent predecessors had been recalled for the very same sort of action that he was about to take. It was indeed impossible for him to carry out Imperial policy without disobedience of the general instructions laid down for his guidance.



Photo by T. Lindsay Fairclough.

REEF BARRIER ACROSS TSUNYANE RIVER, LERIBE.



In July 1844, new to the country and its problems, he had recorded to the Secretary of State his conviction against any interference on his part with the settlement of native boundary and other questions. But just one year later we find him at a conference with Moshesh, after a long journey to the frontier, proposing and presenting a new draft Treaty involving upon all concerned greater obligations than the preceding Treaty: it had the effect also of prejudicing the boundary imbroglio inasmuch as, after hearing all parties at issue, the area of jurisdiction over which the new Treaty extended excluded that portion of country in dispute which the Chief claimed. His influence over it, which he was nevertheless called upon to exercise, was therefore undermined.

According to the official minutes of that conference, dated June 30, 1845, the chief provisions of the new Treaty offered to and subsequently accepted by Moshesh were:—

1. A boundary to be declared exclusive of the territory in dispute.
2. A portion of the undisputed country to be specified and set apart for the occupation of white British subjects.
3. Religious teachers and white persons desirous of carrying on trade and other business to be enabled to acquire land for building.
4. A British Resident to be appointed with power to enforce order and obedience among all British subjects in the territory: his Court to be a tribunal for the trial of natives accused by British subjects:

the punishment of such natives upon sentence to be inflicted by Moshesh.

5. The British Resident and Moshesh to determine the form and duration of leases of occupation to be granted to white men, upon which quit-rents were to be paid, one half to go to the Chief and the other half to the Resident for the cost of his establishment and a police force.

6. The Colonial Government to be prepared to march troops to coerce its subjects contravening the provisions of the Treaty and to protect Moshesh in the enjoyment of his rights.

Sir Peregrine Maitland in his long and nervous despatch of August 1, 1845, apologized for what he had felt bound to do. His object, he said, had been to secure their lands and freedom to the native tribes for hundreds of miles beyond the Colony to the north-east against the encroachment and aggression of self-expatriated British subjects superior in combination and arms and too often ready as well as able to dispute successfully with the rightful owners. But his task was made embarrassing :—

First, by the character of the Emigrant Farmers who were impatient of restraint, disaffected towards the British Government and indifferent to native rights.

Secondly, by the character of the natives who were uncivilized and ignorant, were new occupants of their present abodes and were most difficult to treat with.

Thirdly, on account of the scanty means at his disposal as he could only contemplate measures which entailed no expense upon Government.



The general effect of his action was :—

by enforcing from Moshesh a gift of land for settlement, to open a wide door for the Emigrant whites against whom Sir George Napier's Proclamation inveighed ;

to establish a Resident with responsibilities and duties which it was hopeless to suppose he could fulfil without financial means or force on the spot to meet resistance.

The Governor's arguments in support of his action were sound. Having suffered himself to go forward as the representative of the Queen he sought to lessen the causes of disorder. He could not remove the white men and therefore felt bound to locate them on farms defined by treaty under restraining regulations to be administered by a Resident empowered to arbitrate between Europeans and natives who would otherwise, in seeking redress from wrongs, take the law into their own hands.

In endeavouring to secure the reign of justice at which he aimed, he had practically no alternative to the course he took. But the result was to constitute a new colonial dependency in the wilds and to build up a problem for his successors, in defiance of the reiterated policy of Her Majesty's Government. If, he pleaded, he had fallen into error it was not from the want of anxious and laborious inquiry or an earnest desire to promote impartially the interests of all classes in Southern Africa.

The next step in the business was to select an agent to follow up the arrangements. For that purpose Commandant Gideon Joubert was appointed with instructions

to look into boundary questions, to convince the Emigrants of the advantage of the proposed plans, and to warn all of the determination of Government to march troops when necessary for the maintenance of order and authority. The thin end of the wedge of British expansion was in this manner plainly inserted, as it has been often done in the annals of South Africa. Her Majesty's Government, refusing to consent, consented.

Joubert sped upon his mission to find himself, as he said, soon plunged in the maze of boundary disputes between chiefs whose causes respectively were espoused with much warmth and party feeling by the French and Wesleyan missionaries. He expressed himself in favour of dividing the whole country into small native districts, recommended that the power of Moshesh be broken, otherwise he would become a tiresome and dangerous personage upon whose word no reliance could be placed, and favoured the promotion of disunion among the missionaries who might then confine their attention to religion and be less able to carry on their party plans and proceedings. His mission proved singularly unfortunate for he returned having embittered the relations between Moshesh and his tributaries Moroko, Peter Davids, Carolus Baatje and Taaibosch, and having shown marked prejudice as in favour of the Boer settlers and against the missionaries.

In October 1845 Captain Sutton of the Cape Mounted Rifles was appointed as British Resident under instructions based upon the provisions of the Treaty. His authority as a special magistrate was derived from the Act of Parliament 6th and 7th of William IV., cap. 57, together with a delegated

authority from the chiefs. His jurisdiction, civil and criminal, was practically unlimited in cases between whites and natives. It is important to note, however, that he was not empowered to try cases where white people only or natives only were concerned.

Captain Sutton resigned the office of British Resident and was succeeded in January 1846 by Captain Warden, also of the Cape Mounted Rifles. That officer proceeded immediately to Thaba Bosigo where on arrival he discovered disturbances impending between the Basuto and Mantatis (Batlokoa).

His first act was to summon together the whole body of chiefs who disputed Moshesh's paramountcy, in the hope that they might arrive at an amicable settlement of boundary questions. This they failed to do; but they all, together with Moshesh, signed an application to the Governor for the appointment of an independent Commission with whose decision they bound themselves to abide and in the meantime agreed to refrain from hostilities with each other. Captain Warden approved and forwarded the application. The matter was, however, hung up owing to a Kaffir war in the Cape Colony which occupied the deep attention of Sir Peregrine Maitland, who in the midst of it was "recalled" to be replaced by Sir Henry Pottinger upon whom was conferred an additional commission as High Commissioner for the territories adjacent to the Cape Colony.

Moshesh availed himself of the change to address to the new Governor and High Commissioner a comprehensive review of the past and present state of affairs in which he repeated his claims to territory

previously advanced. The Governor in reply expressed his appreciation of the conduct and fidelity of the Chief but stated that the complicated questions connected with the Basuto country must lie over till a period of more leisure.

Shortly afterwards Sikonyela, in violation of his bond to suspend hostilities, with a body of Mantatis accompanied by some Boers under Piet Botha fell upon a clan living near the source of the Caledon under Moshesh, killing three men and capturing several hundred cattle. Captain Warden promptly intervened, placed the blame upon Sikonyela, fined him and the Boers for their share in the business and ordered restoration of the plunder. It was only partly restored; but the presence and decisive action of the Resident prevented immediate retaliation.

The war in the Cape Colony, commonly known as the "War of the Axe," had caused much disturbance and movement of the Kaffir tribes, some of whom, particularly the Tambookies, were believed to have retreated with stolen cattle into the lower reaches of the Orange River, then under the chieftainship of Moirosi. Captain Warden upon being directed to make inquiries went beyond his instructions. He ascertained the whereabouts of the refugees upon whom he suddenly marched with a corps of 250 Emigrant Farmers and Basuto auxiliaries whom he enrolled and seized 3,000 head of cattle in their possession. The High Commissioner upon receipt of the report expressed his unqualified disapprobation of the exploit, rebuking the Resident severely for allowing himself to be the dupe of Moshesh whom

he accused of duplicity and perfidy in having first encouraged and harboured the supposed Tambookie rebels in Basutoland and then assisted to rob them under cover of the presence of Captain Warden.

The correspondence was forwarded, together with severe comments on the action of the Resident and the untrustworthiness of Moshesh, to the Secretary of State for the Colonies by Sir Henry Pottinger who was however immediately afterwards transferred for service in India, to be succeeded by Sir Harry Smith—a soldier of previous experience at the Cape.

The records show clearly that Sir Henry Pottinger was as hasty in his conclusions as he was lacking in knowledge of the country. He even went so far as to reverse summarily much of the native policy of his predecessor—a most unsettling proceeding. His violent censures upon Captain Warden and Moshesh, before those persons had been fairly allowed time to explain or defend themselves, were passed without consideration of the mass of difficulties they had to contend with in a situation bolstered up by Treaties having no force behind them, and no properly defined spheres of jurisdiction, upon the delimitation of which everything pivoted.

The position of Moshesh was not enviable. He was expected by Government to be answerable for peace and order amongst a mixed population spread over a wide stretch of country where his paramountcy was only partially acknowledged; and, while groping about in the best fashion he could with the aid of his Resident, was denounced by the late Governor in no uncertain terms. His mortification found outlet in

letters to Captain Warden who relieved his mind by expressing entire satisfaction with his past conduct and loyalty. A still greater measure of satisfaction awaited him at the hands of the new Governor.

Sir Harry Smith was a man of much energy and resource, but volatile and eccentric. Within a month from the date of his arrival at the Cape he had ridden through that Colony rapidly, seemingly bent on enlarging its boundaries. By appointment he held a conference at Winburg with Moshesh to whom he abruptly announced his intention to proclaim at once the sovereignty of the Queen over the territories north of the Orange River, including the countries of Moshesh, and other chiefs as far north as the Vaal River and east to the Drakensberg.

A Proclamation, more discursive than legal in phraseology, followed on February 3, 1848. It turned the tables with a vengeance on the declared non-intervention policy of Her Majesty's Government so frequently placarded. Denying profusely any desire to extend the Queen's dominions or deprive chiefs of their hereditary rights, it annexed at a sweep a vast tract of country, with the sole view, as stated, of affording protection and establishing good relations between the miscellaneous people dwelling upon it. For the purpose of better administration of the whole, the laws of the Cape of Good Hope were called into operation ; provision was made for the full organization of Government in respect of lands for whites and blacks, the settlement of boundaries, licensing of traders, building and endowment of churches and schools and the protection of missionaries.



After a painting by Leven about 1856.

From "The Autobiography of Sir Harry Smith," by permission of the editor,  
Mr. G. C. Moore Smith, and the publisher, Mr. John Murray.

SIR HARRY SMITH, BART.

p. 82]





The proclamation of this sovereignty was one of the great authoritative acts of British expansion in Southern Africa. In explanation of his conduct to Earl Grey, then Secretary of State for the Colonies, Sir Harry Smith, defending the bold outline he had adopted, reproduced the arguments used by Sir Peregrine Maitland in justification of his Treaties, adding as his excuse for bringing the white settlers again into the fold of Government that they had appealed pathetically to him in the following words :—

“Look around you, sir ; we are under no authority, no Government. You see the barbarian provided with ministers and teachers of the Gospel, schools, etc., while we in consequence of our own voluntary expatriation cannot even marry or bury our dead and must eventually fall back to savage life.”

As a document bearing largely upon the affairs of Basutoland and affecting the conditions of the entire population adjacent, it is one of interest as well as a landmark in the constitutional history of South Africa.

#### “ PROCLAMATION

“By His Excellency Lieut.-Gen. Sir Henry George Wakelyn Smith :—

“Whereas, as Her Majesty’s High Commissioner for the settlement and adjustment of the Boundaries, and an amicable and clear understanding of the affairs and relationships with the Chiefs, tribes, and People adjacent to the Colony of the Cape of Good Hope, I have placed upon a permanent foundation the preser-

vation of peace, harmony, mutual confidence and the attainment of civilization on the eastern boundary, and have personally visited the countries upon the north and north-eastern boundary of the Colony, on the line leading to Her Majesty's Settlement of Natal, annexed to the Colony of the Cape of Good Hope, for the purpose of obtaining information from all the various parties concerned upon matters so involving the interests, not only of the Native Chiefs of the countries into which many of Her Majesty's legal subjects have established themselves, but also of those subjects themselves ; and have personally conferred with the leading Chiefs of the neighbouring Tribes, and with many of the meritorious and devout Missionaries, as well as with the influential and thinking men of Her Majesty's subjects located aforesaid ; and have received several addresses very numerous signed by the inhabitants between the Orange, the Modder and Riet Rivers, as well as from those around Bloemfontein, and from the Caledon River, and also those from the neighbourhood and at Winburg :

“ Now, therefore, by virtue of the several powers and authorities in me vested, and subject to Her Royal confirmation, I do hereby proclaim, declare and make known, the Sovereignty of Her Majesty the Queen of England over the Territories north of the Great Orange River, including the countries of Moshesh, Moroko, Molitsane, Sikonyela, Adam Kok, Gert Taaibosch, and other minor chiefs as far north as to the Vaal River, and east to the Drakensberg or Quathlamba mountains ; with no desire or inclination whatever on the part of Her Majesty to extend

or increase her Dominions, or to deprive the Chiefs and their People of the hereditary rights acknowledged and recognized by all civilized nations of the world as appertaining to the Nomadic Races of the earth ; but on the contrary, with the sole view of establishing an amicable relationship with those Chiefs, of upholding them in their hereditary rights, and protecting them from any future aggression or location of Her Majesty's subjects, as well as providing for their rule, and the maintenance of good order, and obedience to Her Majesty's laws and commands on the part of those of the Queen's subjects who, having abandoned the land of their fathers, have located themselves within the territories aforesaid ; and I hereby proclaim that all the Chiefs of the Territories aforesaid are under the Sovereignty of Her Majesty as the paramount and exclusive authority in all international disputes as to territory, or in any cause whatever tending to interrupt the general peace and harmony of South Africa, but that their authority over their own tribes shall be maintained, as well as their own laws, according to their customs and usages.

“ And I hereby proclaim that all Her Majesty's subjects within the territories aforesaid shall be governed by the Laws, Ordinances and Proclamations framed, and to be framed, for Her Majesty's Colony of the Cape of Good Hope, and that they shall henceforth be in full possession of the rights of citizens of the said Colony, and that Municipalities, Corporations and other privileges shall be granted to them, as their increase and improvement may require.

“ And I do hereby proclaim that Her Majesty's

Government assumes the responsibility to the Chiefs as regards their just indemnification for all lands now occupied by these Her Majesty's subjects, upon the latter paying an annual quit-rent, according to a schedule which shall be established by a Commissioner appointed for the purpose, and upon the condition that every able-bodied man turns out in the defence of Her Majesty and her allies, either with arms, or as special constables, as may be required by the British Resident and Magistrates.

“The appropriation of these quit-rents shall be: Firstly, for the fair and honest remuneration and indemnification of the Native Chiefs, in lieu of any and all Contracts or Leases entered into by Her Majesty's subjects, so that no breach of faith shall exist, in the faith of an agreement entered into by Her Majesty's High Commissioner with the great Chiefs Moshesh, Moroko, Sikonyela, Adam Kok and others. Secondly, for the defraying the expenses of their own government, viz. the British Resident at Bloemfontein, Magistrates, etc., as shall hereafter be appointed, with Sheriff's officers, Constables, etc., and Field-Commandants and Field-Cornets, etc., as the full organization of a Government may require, and for bearing the expense of sending into Colesberg all criminal cases which must be tried before the judges.

“And I hereby proclaim and declare, that every Trader or other individual trafficking, or engaged in commerce, within the territories aforesaid, shall pay an annual license of £50, in like manner as the Traders in British Kaffraria; these licenses to be

obtained from any Commissioner within or without the Colony, who are hereby authorized to grant the same: and all sums which thus accrue, and whatever surplus remains of the sums collected as quit-rents, after the payment of the indemnification to the Native Chiefs for the Lands, and the expense of the Government aforesaid, shall be vested in a fund, under the control of a Commission composed of members of the Dutch Reformed Church, appointed by Her Majesty's High Commissioner, for the erection of churches on such spots as may be selected and sanctioned, and for the provision of ministers, and hereafter for the erection of schools and for their maintenance, for the improvement of roads, etc., all for the exclusive benefit of the population north of the Orange River. And whatever sums may be subscribed for the erection of any church or churches, as Her Majesty's High Commissioner, I pledge myself to advance on loan an equal sum.

“And I hereby proclaim all the missionary stations in the territories aforesaid to be under the special protection of Her Majesty the Queen of England.

“And I hereby proclaim and declare that the sovereignty and paramount authority is for the sole protection and preservation of the just and hereditary rights of all the Native Chiefs as aforesaid, and for the rule and government of Her Majesty's subjects, their interests and welfare. That no benefit whatever accrues, or is desired by Her Majesty, beyond the satisfaction Her Majesty the Queen will ever feel in the maintenance of a just peace, and the improvement of the condition of her people, and in their

advancement in the blessings of Christianity, civilization, and those habits of industry and honesty which will elevate and civilize the barbarian, and support and uphold the Christian community, and thus will that peace be established which Her Majesty desires to effect, and has the power and determination to maintain.

“Given under my hand . . . this 3rd day of February, 1848.

“(Signed) H. G. SMITH.”

After issuing this grotesque Proclamation Sir Harry Smith returned to Cape Town full of hope and confidence. But the course of affairs did not run smoothly. He had misread political feeling; all was not peace. No sooner was his back turned than Moshesh was approached by Commandant-General Andries Pretorius, leader of the Boers in the Sovereignty, now numbering over a thousand, who demanded an answer to the following question:—

“We perceive an arrangement which you made with the Governor Sir Harry Smith, in which you have ceded to him all the land which we occupy, and which is the cause that British jurisdiction is now extended over us. We therefore, as your old friend, know not what to say of you, whether you are our friend or enemy? If we are to judge of your acts it is not friendship. We ask you from whom do you obtain security, the Boers or the Government? Consider what may happen to you in the ten years to come. On that account we wish to know the truth.”

Moshesh, being cornered, replied in conciliatory and assuring terms. At the same time he wrote to Sir

Harry Smith calling attention to the base conduct of some of the Dutch farmers going about inciting to revolt and adding,—

“I know Smith, the brave and generous, will not make me repent of having cast my lot into his hands.”

The fact was that he was left alone to settle accounts with the farmers, whom he feared, and he was guilty of that *finesse*, almost inseparable from the situation, which his detractors have always laid to his charge.

The emotional feelings of Sir Harry Smith were touched by the entreaties of Moshesh, to whom he replied on March 23, 1848 :—

“RESPECTED CHIEF AND FRIEND MOSHESH,

I hear with regret that there are wicked men going about who desire to disturb that Peace which you and I have established and will maintain. Such vile men after all we have done to render them happy and settled must be taught their duty to God and to man. I rely upon your good faith as I pray you to believe in mine. . . . Your gun is in the hands of the gun-maker. . . . *Depend on my word.* . . . We will not forget the snuff.”

And again, dated May 28 :—

“MY WORTHY AND VALUED FRIEND, THE GREAT CHIEF MOSHESH,

“I have received copies of the communications which have passed between you and Pretorius which is a further proof that you are a true Ally to Her Majesty of England. Rest assured, Chief, that is the line for you to pursue. Her Majesty, through me, will allow

no one, great or minor, Chief or Peasant, Black or White, to be imposed on or tampered with, with impunity. . . .

“ Believe me, Chief, I often think of the pleasure I had in meeting you at Winburg. I at once discovered the dignity of your character and worthiness to be a Chief. I have now only one ardent wish to express to you,—that you provide for the future blessed state of your immortal Soul and that you become a convert to the Christian Faith, and worship Almighty and Omnipotent God through his Son our Lord Jesus Christ. Apply at once therefore to your Excellent Missionary, who will explain to you how all good men will meet hereafter in Heaven and enjoy eternal Bliss.”

Whether Moshesh was moved in spirit by these letters is unknown, but no doubt they occasioned him some anxiety. If he felt flattered by their fulsomeness after the abuse poured upon him by Sir Henry Pottinger, he was also perplexed at the many changes in policy and temper experienced in the last few years. He felt certain that the Boers had come to stay, were in ill-humour about the future, and were a power he would have to reckon with. His difficulty was to reconcile the visionary support of the British Governor, who came for a day or two with fine promises and vanished, with the ever-present strength of the Dutch settlers whose numbers were daily increasing. They were the enemy in the gate and could not be despised notwithstanding Imperial pledges. Whilst puzzling over this quandary the curtain dropped for a new scene. The Sovereignty Boers revolted.





BASUTO POTTERY.



WIRE AND OTHER WORK.



## CHAPTER IX

The revolt of the Emigrant Boers is crushed: Moshesh becomes embarrassed by the ambition of his sons and loses the confidence of the British Authorities, who make Boundaries and send him an Ultimatum

1848—1850

THE Emigrant Boers had solemnly declared that in quitting Cape Colony they were leaving the fruitful land of their birth, where they had suffered continual vexation, and were about to enter a strange and dangerous territory under the full assurance that the English Government had nothing more to require of them and would allow them to govern themselves without its interference in future.

It has been held by many who have written about their struggles and vicissitudes that they were doggedly followed up and persecuted by the British from whose rule they repeatedly retired at great sacrifice rather than endure it. The Proclamation of the Sovereignty lent colour to that view. But whether it was morally right or politically justifiable are questions apart from the facts necessary to relate in so far as they affect Basutoland. The central idea in Sir Harry Smith's mind appears to have been to set aside two distinct

areas, one for white people to be governed by the Colonial Authorities, and the other under the High Commissioner's control exclusively for natives who should be allowed to manage their own domestic affairs.

The Emigrants, now united under command of Andries Pretorius, disliked both the new conditions which bound them to military service and subservience of any sort to the Government they hated. Those living in close proximity to the native frontier had deluded the Governor into believing they represented the feelings of all their brethren in praying for his intervention. But the great majority were of a different opinion. Incensed, after their labours and dangers, that the fruits of success in their designs upon native lands had been snatched from them, they broke into open rebellion in July 1848, compelling the British Resident with his staff of officials and handful of police to evacuate Bloemfontein, where the head-quarters of the Sovereignty Government had been established.

Sir Harry Smith, angry at seeing his plans and policy so outrageously defied, at once repaired to the Orange River, which he crossed with a considerable force of British troops drawn from the Cape, and after several skirmishes came into action at Boomplaats with the Boers who were beaten and dispersed, both sides suffering serious losses. An order for the Basuto to co-operate with the British forces against the Boers was happily countermanded just in time to prevent such a catastrophe as must have followed had they done so. Bloemfontein was re-occupied, and

an indiscreet Proclamation issued praising Moshesh and other chiefs, "who although tampered with by the Arch-rebel Pretorius, who by means of falsehood and fraud endeavoured to convince them that their cause was abandoned by Her Majesty, nevertheless remained unshaken in their faith and firm reliance on the resolve of Her Majesty's Representative to march immediately to their protection."

Such ebullitions were always reactionary, for they naturally tended to exasperate the Boers when held up to the contempt of the natives.

Authority having been again established, the Governor held a large meeting at Winburg attended by many of the Emigrants and by thousands of armed natives led by Moshesh who was made such a hero that he bubbled over with pride and faith in the British. Several days were given up to revelry, military reviews and Kaffir dances. Some account of this carnival and the Governor's vague promises is given in the following extract of a letter from the Rev. Mr. Casalis to Mr. Rolland, President of the Conference of French Missionaries in Basutoland.

"THABA BOSIGO, 14th February, 1848.

"DEAR BROTHER,

"Moshesh begs me to communicate to you the result of his interview with the Governor. . . .

"Starting from here we went and slept in the fields one hour's ride from Thaba Nchu, having been unable to reach the village. At three o'clock in the morning we were about to put foot to stirrup when two dragoons appeared and told us that they were ordered

to conduct us to Winburg, for it was there that His Excellency Sir Harry Smith wished to meet Moshesh. Ten hours of forced marching brought us to our destination. The Governor had not yet arrived. The following morning the people of Winburg received an invitation from him to go and meet him. . . . He was on horseback, without an escort, not even a Hottentot. . . .

“His Excellency was very gracious, spoke to me in French (very well) ; recalled the Pyrenees and the battle of Orthez, at which he had been present ; complimented Moshesh on his skill in horsemanship ; told him that he knew him well, and had often heard him spoken of ; made him a present of two new saddles of the latest make, of a marquee tent, a gold watch (all this whilst cantering for half an hour) ; asked him if the country of Winburg belonged to the Basutos, to which Moshesh replied in the affirmative. . . . We entered the village under a fire of musketry.

“‘Moshesh,’ said Smith, ‘that is the sound which war generally makes, but to-day it is a sign of peace. I bring peace. I have fought much, but I declare that there is not a man in the world who has as great a horror of war as I have. It is a horrible thing.’ Moshesh said that ‘Peace is the mother of nations.’

“We off-saddled, and an hour afterwards the Conference began. . . . I was called to act as interpreter. The Governor opened the proceedings by thanking Moshesh in the name of the Queen for the kind and wise conduct he had exercised towards Her Majesty’s subjects who had emigrated from the Colony without her permission. He said that in all

these matters Moshesh had shown himself a Chief, a man at the height of his social position. His Excellency then announced that he was expressly sent by the Queen to place everything on a solid footing. That the great object they sought to obtain was a durable peace between the natives themselves, and between the natives and the Colony and all British subjects. Further, that after having minutely examined the subject in all its aspects, he could not see how it was possible to displace the Boers; it would provoke war, and what good could result? Wherever they might be placed, it would be on somebody's land. That provided the Boers confined themselves to what they had obtained till now, were prevented from making further encroachments, and were governed where they now were, it seemed to him (Sir H. Smith) the ill done might be repaired, at least as far as reparation was possible.

“Therefore, with the view of, *first*, assuring a durable peace between all parties; *secondly*, in order to preserve intact the hereditary rights of the Chiefs; and *thirdly*, to oblige the Boers to remain within the locations at present occupied by them—

i. “He would at once proclaim the Sovereignty of the Queen of England over all lands held now by the Boers.

ii. “He would establish magistrates . . .

iii. “He would send up a Commission to determine the Boer locations.

iv. “He would issue orders for the erection of Churches and Schools to prevent the spread of infidelity and immorality among the Emigrant Farmers, seeing

that some were fallen nearly to a level with the natives. . . .

“Moshesh then brought forward the disputes existing between Sikonyela, Moroko, and himself with regard to the land. His Excellency replied these would be discussed later on, the Commission would take the matter in hand, if necessary. ‘But for my part,’ he added, ‘I believe you are quite right, and I would beg of you not to be uneasy about it. In proclaiming the Sovereignty of the Queen, it is as much to protect Moshesh against his internal as his external enemies. Trust to me, and no one will dare to raise his hand against the Great Chief of the Basutos.’ Then, raising his right hand about a foot above the desk, His Excellency added, ‘Moshesh is like this’; then raising his left hand another foot above the right, he said, ‘but Her Majesty is as this.’ . . .

“His Excellency then with a stentorian voice called for a Councillor of Makomo to come in, that he might relate to Moshesh the circumstances concluding the Kaffir war. The poor fellow gave his account with a pretty good grace, Moshesh speaking to him in Kaffir, which agreeably surprised Sir Harry, who joined in the conversation, speaking Kaffir rightly or wrongly mattered not. At the conclusion of the history of the close of the war, the Governor leant his head upon his hand and began to snore with all his might, then said to Moshesh, ‘Every one is to sleep in that way now.’ He then cried out in a loud voice, which might have been heard half a mile off, ‘Come here, come near, Sir!’ The poor Councillor, half bewildered, hardly knew what he was doing. ‘Come here, shake hands



with the Great Inkosi of the land.' In coming out of the meeting he followed me, and said, 'Do not be in trouble about your Mission Stations; I will attend to them and protect them.'

"Shortly after he called a meeting with the Boers, and presented Moshesh to them. Holding him by the hand, he said to them it was to this man they were indebted for the peace they had enjoyed. He then explained to them his plan, adding, 'Let no man move from his place on which he is, and let no man presume to encroach upon Moshesh'; but if they (the farmers) still spoke of revolt and were determined to go and recommence their oppressions in other lands, he, the Governor, would follow them up, even though it were to the gates of the infernal regions! . . . The Governor proceeded to say, 'We must set to work at once and begin to build a church. There is £25 for my share. You are living without divine worship, without schools. What a state of degradation!' He then invited me to offer prayer over the stone. On my concluding, His Excellency came forward and knelt reverently upon the stone. Then rising, he took me by the arm, saying, 'Let us go.' To my great surprise the tears were flowing down his cheeks. He tried to speak with me, but was unable to do so. Upon reaching the house he said to me, 'I never felt so much in all my life.' I could hardly trust my ears. What a man! I never met with one having such a diversity of character—an iron will joined to a surprising simplicity.

"His Excellency insisted that I should remain with him to have a little conversation. . . .

"'When business is done,' he said, 'I am no more

the Governor.' I had been referring to the difficulties of the situation. 'Sir,' he exclaimed, 'it is useless to speak of difficulties; they are to be met with wherever you go; perhaps Moshesh and I will both be dead to-morrow. Between two evils we must just choose the least.' . . .

"At four o'clock the next morning he was already on the road towards Natal. Commandant Joubert complains that he allows no one to sleep.

"Believe me, etc.,

"(Signed) E. CASALIS."

After this meeting Sir Harry Smith, before hurrying back to Cape Town, wrote effusive letters denouncing the Emigrant Boers to Moshesh who, estimating correctly the idiosyncrasies of the writer, replied in the same strain, as will appear from the following extracts from his valedictory letter of September 11.

#### MOSHESH *to* SIR HARRY SMITH

"Go, Great Warrior of your Nation, go under the shield of your mighty God Jehovah by whose help, you tell me, you have been able to do such great things in this country.

"Go, Great Leader of the soldiers of the Lady your Queen, tell Her Gracious Majesty in my name that I love her Government, I love her Warriors whose deeds of valour have filled me with wonder. Tell Her Majesty I am sensible of the great debt I owe to the brave General of her troops who has in a few days driven back and scattered the host of the wicked

Rebels, who would have been a scourge to my nation . . . if they had succeeded in their plot. . . . Tell, Great Warrior, tell Her Majesty this is the heart of Moshesh the faithful Mosutu.

“Now, I commend to your Excellency my people’s cause. Let your wise Commissioners for arranging the farms with the Boers be told to remember that my people are very numerous—that much of their country is possessed by Boers who have never received permission from me. . . .”

These ill-considered letters of exultation were of course published. The High Commissioner having really done nothing to remedy the causes of unrest, had again vanished with his troops, leaving Moshesh to face the music with those he had maligned, and they were not forgiving. But, since Boomplaats, they feared to take open revenge, so resorted to the policy of intriguing—a policy of profit and enjoyment consisting of setting one chief against another in the hope that they would exhaust each other and then, in order to gain help at a crisis, be ready to sell their rights for a trifle. A willing tool was found at hand in Sikonyela whose restless spirit always responded when chances offered to start his turbulent Batlokoa on the war path. Between them and the Basuto the old feud smouldered only, awaiting opportunity for kindling. The opportunity was prompted.

Sikonyela lent his ear to whispers that he should resist the aggressive encroachment of Basuto villages deliberately built on lands claimed by him. He did so by the usual method of burning the villages and

seizing cattle, drawing on at once a conflict that was to flare up intermittently for a long time and to introduce new factors. These were the sons of Moshesh who were destined to beget for their father more trouble and anxiety than he had ever yet experienced and eventually to bring his grey hairs with sorrow to the grave.

The young chiefs of whom there were now many were ambitious and headstrong. On arriving at a state of manhood they were eager to signalize it by deeds worthy of their ancestors, and their ideas upon that subject did not synchronize with those of their father with whom they were dissatisfied on account of his leanings towards peace. The education of some had only sharpened their intelligence. Each wanted a large inheritance of his own and that was not in their opinion to be successfully won in a country that was being hedged about according to the whims of transient High Commissioners. They were not content therefore with their father's tolerant acquiescence in boundaries and pushed forward outposts that came into contact with the Boers and neighbouring Chiefs. In this they were supported by some of the old Councillors who publicly upbraided the Chief for yielding up land required for the children.

Sikonyela's pugnacious action lighted the torch they were longing to see. He was attacked viciously by a body of Basuto led in person by three of the senior sons, viz. Letsie, Molapo and Nehemiah, with disastrous results, his brother Mota's wife and twenty men being killed, many wounded, villages burned and a lot of cattle captured. Reprisals followed in which other

chiefs were involved and a general conflagration was arrested only by the timely intervention of Mr. Southey, Secretary to the High Commissioner, and the British Resident, who pluckily got in between the combatants at a spot near the Caledon River midway between their respective strongholds, inducing them to suspend hostilities.

With the approval of Sir Harry Smith, Major Warden presided over a Court of Inquiry on November 8, 1848, having for its object a settlement of the differences and delimitation of boundaries subject to confirmation by the High Commissioner to whom the Proceedings were transmitted. In his covering remarks upon them Major Warden expressed surprise that Moshesh objected to delimitation and reluctantly stated that the Boundary question had come to be a matter having more relation to the Wesleyan and Paris Mission Societies than to the Chiefs themselves. He added, "The Rev. Mr. Hartley (Wesleyan) during the whole sitting of the Commission was in a very excited state . . . the occurrences of the last few days had so worked upon the mind of the Rev. Gentleman that he was seized with brain fever from which I lament to say he expired shortly after reaching his home."

Sir Harry Smith, while admitting faults on both sides, wrote to Moshesh a mild censure for appealing to arms, commanding obedience to his decision, and concluding: "Peace and the word of Christ is to be your motto, and if you write to me and say such is your heart's desire, I will write to England for two seals like mine for you, with this motto, 'Peace and the word of Christ.'"

## DECISION OF THE HIGH COMMISSIONER

“ Decision on the violent dispute causing wickedly the shedding of blood between the Tribes of Moshesh and Sikonyela, which ought to have been avoided by an appeal to me :—

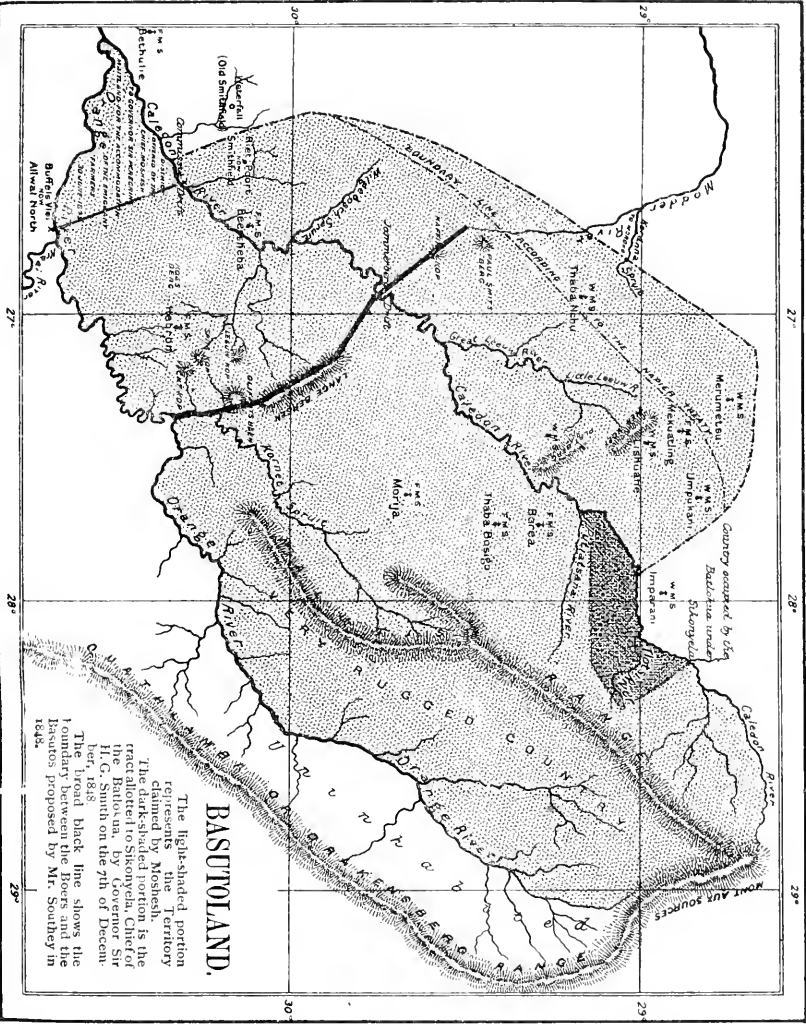
“ 1. The Boundary line between Moshesh and Sikonyela shall be as follows, and according to the Sketch accompanying this, thereby annulling all previous engagements as to those Territories—viz. : From the source of the Nquoti river to its junction with the Caledon, thence with a straight line through the source of the Thlotsi to the high-land between the Caledon and Putiatsana rivers, thence along the said high-land to the junction of the Caledon and Putiatsana.

“ 2. All cattle, horses and goats that have been seized are to be restored to their respective and rightful owners, upon which the boundary is to be considered as completed and defined.

“ 3. [Irrelevant.]

“(Signed) H. G. SMITH,  
at Cape Town, 7th December, 1848.”

The Decision in general was unpractical and was laughed at. The line, based upon faulty intelligence maps, was imaginary, taking no account of the fact that villages of the belligerents lay upon either side of it. Moreover, the river sources and high-lands named were all disputable features. There was no force to compel removal of the villages or the return of spoils each had captured. Each side had lost about the same number of killed and were intent upon further



### BASUTOLAND.

The light-shaded portion represents the territory claimed by Moshoeshoe. The dark-shaded portion is the tract allotted to Sikonyela, Chief of the Basuto, by Governor Sir H. G. Smith on the 7th of December, 1818.

The broad black line shows the boundary between the Boers and the Basutos proposed by Mr. Soutley in 1845.







Photo by T. Lindsay Fairclough.

BOLSHAYA SLOPES.



hostilities, Sikonyela adding fuel to the fire by claiming Inta, a daughter of Moshesh, as a blood hostage to be put to death in revenge for the killing, alleged to be accidental, of Mota's wife.

On the preceding sketch map No. II. will be seen a line indicating the tract of country which Mr. Southey proposed to the High Commissioner should be cut off from Basutoland for definite allotment to the Emigrant Farmers, and another line showing the portion offered by Moshesh for the purpose to Sir Peregrine Maitland. The sons of the Chief, exhorted by Letsie the elder, opposed this proposal, avowing, it was said, that when the Governor came to make the line Moshesh would assemble his forces, that where his skull lay there should the first beacon be planted, and that a stream of blood would that day run as large as the Caledon river.

Threats of this character caused amongst the farmers great alarm, shared equally by the British Resident, who wrote to the High Commissioner, after several vain attempts to calm excitement by conferences, that he was doubtful of the honesty of Moshesh, whose young sons were determined to prevent any amicable settlement with anybody; that nothing less than the presence of a strong Government force would bring the people to order and clinch the important boundary question upon which future peace depended. Thereupon he took upon himself the responsibility of ordering the despatch of troops from Bloemfontein to the disturbed districts, where further tumult had in the interval arisen in consequence of Molapo and the Bataung under Molitsane in combination having

swept off quantities of cattle belonging to Sikonyela and killed many men.

The High Commissioner first reproved Major Warden for assuming an "unwarrantable responsibility" and then approved the plan to make a display of force. On its arrival, Major Warden convened a meeting of Chiefs near the Basutoland border, no Basuto representatives being present, and after hearing evidence gave an Award to the effect that Moshesh should withdraw all his people improperly placed on Sikonyela's land, and that 73 horses, 6,303 cattle, 2,420 sheep and 2,966 goats seized from him should be restored within three weeks. Similarly, all stock (unnumbered) captured from the Basuto by the Batlokoa were to be returned.

In reporting to the High Commissioner, the Resident expressed, as he frequently appears to have done without sufficient justification, his satisfaction at the promise of a speedy and amicable settlement. But he blamed Moshesh for procrastinating and contempt which he ascribed to the overbearing of his sons whose evil influence over their father was obvious. This report was followed by a letter couched in gloomy terms exhibiting for the first time want of confidence in Moshesh, adding, "the country cannot enjoy peace until the Basuto tribe, of late years become powerful, be put under some restraint. . . . At present they are most insolent to their neighbours of other nations and establish Kralls wherever they please."

Sir Harry Smith also began to waver in his admiration for the Chief, for in replying to the Resident in August 1849 he wrote:—

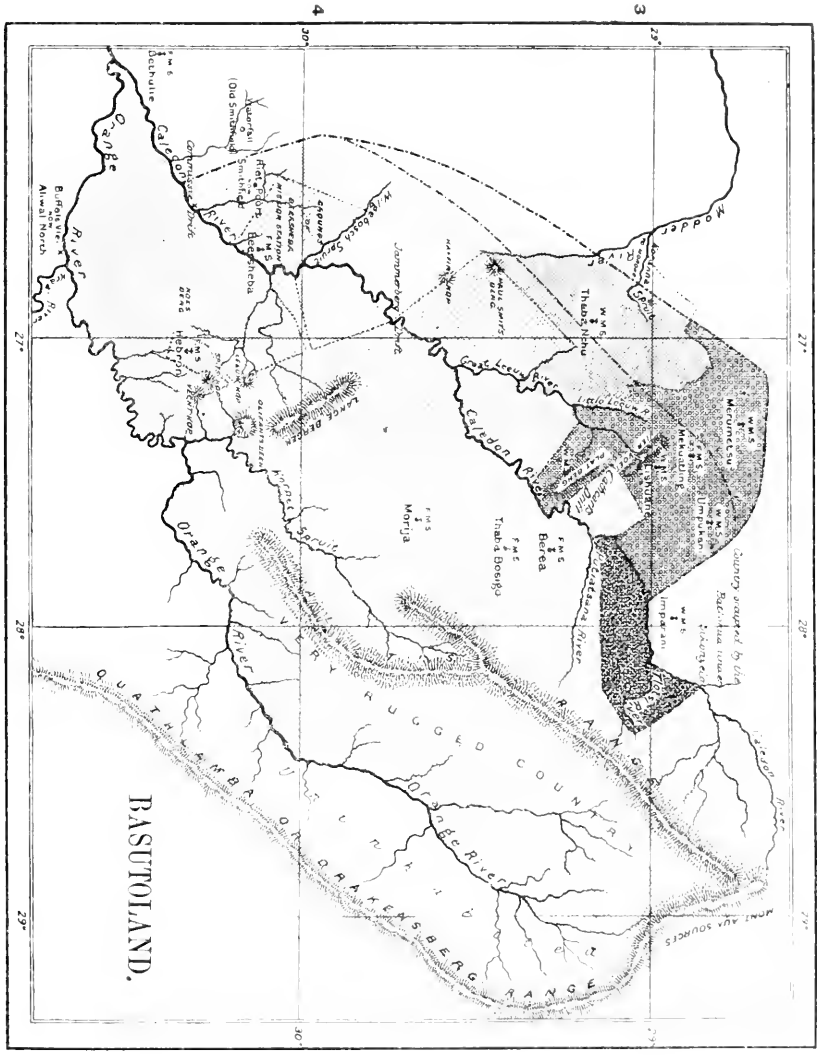
“It is evident to me that Moshesh is acting dishonestly and that the ambition of his sons has prompted him to the improper line he has pursued. Your suggestion therefore that this Chief must be humbled . . . must be carried out . . . you should point out to him your determination and make it evident that if war ensue he bears the responsibility. . . . If Moshesh shuts himself up in his mountain, Thaba Bosigo, I believe some howitzer shells may be thrown upon him. . . . But accusations of the other chiefs must be carefully received, for they are all jealous of him.”

In these words are to be read the first rumblings of the wars to follow later. Sir Harry Smith had clearly flung away the scabbard.

Major Warden, whose capacity to comprehend and deal successfully with natives has been much questioned, must be given the credit for the exercise at this moment of considerable patience. He communicated with Moshesh time after time in most temperate language, invoked the aid of his missionaries and left no stone unturned to promote common understandings. But he could not get promises kept, nor captured stock returned, nor restrain the unruly passions of the younger chiefs. Out of 11,000 head of stock alleged to have been raided from the Batlokoa, Moshesh was held to have absolved himself by handing over two thousand odd animals in poor condition ; but from Molitsane comparatively few could be extracted and while negotiations were proceeding the situation was compromised by Sikonyela aided by other clans falling suddenly upon the Bataung, killing 50 men and destroying many villages.

The British Resident now felt that the position was desperate. He was being pressed by the Boers, who saw a favourable opportunity when most of the tribes were well involved, to get the land marked off in the lower Caledon District, which they had occupied in a precarious manner since the Treaty of Sir Peregrine Maitland ; he was tired of the incessant strife and disputes arising out of boundaries. In despair he held another large meeting of chiefs, Moshesh excepted, animated with the belief that the safest guarantee for the future was to form a League binding all to unite and suppress any chief disturbing the peace of the country. In pursuance of that idea an alliance was planned by him of tribes nearly all inimical to the Basuto. Thus equipped he summoned Moshesh to come and discuss boundaries. That Chief wrote several letters in September 1849 pleading his inability from fear, illness and other causes to attend, the real reason however being that he dreaded being forced personally to assent to boundary lines because he felt certain his sons, who had already committed themselves by displacing temporary beacons, would reject the idea and resist any agreement. He did not therefore attend but sent his son Letsie as a mere spectator with instructions to listen only. The Resident was insulted and after waiting twelve days and giving the Chief fair latitude he sent for his signature a rough sketch of a line between Basutoland and the Emigrants as shown in Map III. attached.

This was signed by Moshesh under protest that it took from him much land allowed to him under the Napier Treaty, and was returned accompanied with a



**NOTE ON ORIGINAL MAP.**

1. The territory governed by Moheba, according to the boundaries defined by the British Resident and approved of by the High Commissioner in 1849.
2. The tract of country divided by the British Resident among various petty Chiefs. No two charts made at the time agree as to the different boundaries, and as defined in the Government Notice they cannot now be laid down accurately. The correct outer boundary of this section between the Orange and Caledon Rivers is shown in the original map.
3. The territory assigned to the claim of the Boshofien under the Chief Moroko.
4. The portions added to the district of Boshofien and Caledon River. The two Mission Stations of Beersheba and Hebron were reserved for the Basutos, and were to have outlets, which were never, however, accurately defined.
5. The territory south of the Caledon assigned to the Batsokua.





memorial to the High Commissioner from the French missionaries who urged the iniquity of removing, as required, 100 Basuto villages or including them in the country allotted to the Boers, and represented that the document had been unwillingly signed out of fear, but it had created feelings of dangerous discontent in the tribe.

Major Warden then assiduously applied himself to the completion of other delimitations for Sikonyela, Taaibosch, Molitsane and Moroko, each draining a portion of the territory claimed by Moshesh, a little here and a little there. But they were approved and confirmed by the High Commissioner who issued a Government Notice contemplated to mark out, in respect of the entire Sovereignty, the spheres of occupation relatively of all the native tribes beyond the Orange River and of the Emigrant Farmers.

This Notice, as appended, like many others promulgated by Sir Harry Smith, was badly framed, leaving abundant room for dispute. The natives were at a disadvantage in having to trace if they could physical features quoted under Boer names, whilst the identity of certain mountains and ranges, unnamed, proved to be a matter of conjecture.

“NOTICE.

“GOVERNMENT HOUSE, CAPE TOWN,  
18 Dec. 1849.

“His Excellency Her Majesty’s High Commissioner has been pleased to approve and confirm the undermentioned boundaries between the several districts of the Sovereignty beyond the Orange River and the

Native Chiefs, as arranged by the British Resident and Land Commissions, in conjunction with the Native Chiefs, and laid down by the Surveyor F. Rex, Esq., viz. :—

“From the junction of Cornet Spruit with the Orange River to Vecht Kop, thence to Leeuw Kop, thence to Jammer Drift on the Caledon River, thence to the source of Modder River at the farm of Paul Smit, from thence down the said Modder River to its junction with Koranna Spruit until abreast of a rocky hill north of said spruit, from thence up to and over said rocky hill to a beacon erected by the British Resident and the Chief Moroko, thence in a straight line to a beacon on a low ridge east of Hans Stein’s homestead, thence in a direct line to the south-west corner beacon of the farm Roelofsfontein of Roelof I. van Rooyen, thence to a hill called Gouverneur’s Kop, thence to a remarkable fracture in a hill called Lot’s Pillar, thence passing the northern edge of a mountain (not named) to a remarkable feature (on a range of mountains running from north to south) called Sikonyela’s Hoed, and from thence in an easterly direction to a high mountain terminating a range running from east to west.

“By order of His Excellency the High Commissioner.

“(Signed) RICHARD SOUTHEY, Secretary.”

Though no boundaries could satisfy all parties, the determination of land rights was a step towards some sort of finality. But the effect was to circumscribe Basutoland, to cut away nearly all the land of chiefs

claimed by Moshesh as tributaries, and to leave the Batlokoa under Sikonyela dangerously wedged in under the Maluti mountains across the main arteries of traffic between north and south Basutoland (*vide* Map III.). The sons and councillors of Moshesh did not disguise their objection to thus being hemmed in, feeling that the country left to them below their mountains was absurdly inadequate to their wants and aspirations. They did not prevent the Chief from accepting the Notice but resolved to ignore it.

Sir Harry Smith's dream of paper boundaries by Government Notice being made to produce the magical effect of separating the Sovereignty into camps containing happy and contented populations of whites and natives, all at daggers drawn, was not under the circumstances capable of fulfilment. Numbers of each race were still squatting promiscuously under no kind of control on forbidden ground on either side. There was no organization to remove them, so that festering sores were plentiful.

Moshesh was playing the part of a loyal subject of the Queen by submitting painfully to conditions imposed upon him whilst his sons schemed to win back by contumacy what he was allowing himself to be squeezed out of. They realized that their vassals had, through boundary making, been given independence and had slipped away from them—even more, were being utilized by a League to check the power of the Basuto. The result was mistrust of the British Government and estrangement.

In this frame of mind, led by impetuous young chiefs, the Basuto sought excuses to violate the terri-

tory torn from them in the hope that by diplomatic or worrying tactics they might recover what was lost. Their designs were facilitated by their old enemy the Batlokoa whose unfortunate placement so near the *enceinte* at Thaba Bosigo was a source of intense irritation. Sikonyela, unable to remain long quiet, plundered and murdered some Bataung under Moli-tsane who, secretly aided by his allies the Basuto, retaliated by a murderous incursion against a mission station upon which Batlokoa were residing, killing twenty men and looting a quantity of stock.

These acts so annoyed Major Warden after his hopeful despatches to the High Commissioner that he obtained leave to take a body of troops and Boers to punish the delinquents for their contempt of authority and if necessary to pursue them into Basutoland. Accordingly in September 1850 he attacked the Bataung at Mekuatleng, killed 20 and captured 3,468 cattle. Whilst so employed, outlying bands of Bataung assisted by Basuto surprised some villages of Moroko near Thaba Nchu and swept off 3,000 cattle which were rushed across the border into the mountains of Basutoland. Moshesh was in despair over this unforeseen complication, which personally he had neither sought nor condoned, knowing how difficult it was to prevent cattle so acquired being eaten and hidden. In response to the angry demand of the Resident who was in the neighbourhood with armed forces he collected by contribution 2,000 cattle for restoration to the Baralong of Moroko. Major Warden received them as an instalment but was not appeased and plied the Chief for a considerable time with pressing demands for more.

Meanwhile attention was diverted to two other directions where the Baphuti under Moirosi, tributary to Moshesh, were, under suspicion of aiding rebel refugees from the Cape Colony, attacked by the Colonial Government forces on the lower Orange River; and the Tambookies, also tributary, came to blows with the Emigrant Farmers in the newly made Caledon District. Major Warden, without properly consulting Moshesh, with an irregular force and levies stiffened by some troops from Bloemfontein, took the field, in each case inflicting loss and capturing booty. Against the Tambookies he wrongly and without permission enlisted the help of Moshesh's brother Poshudi, who amongst other atrocities barbarously murdered three envoys; on that occasion also a number of children were captured and sold or allotted as slaves at the instance of one Captain Baillie. Regarding this expedition Moshesh wrote to Major Warden—"The late conflict with Moirosi and your people has surprised and exasperated the Basuto." These affairs embittered the Basuto who felt that the Government was more and more disposed to harass them and alienate their vassals.

Moshesh was now forced to the conclusion that he had lost the confidence of the British Resident, to whom he wrote in September 1850:—

"I have repeatedly protested that I am willing to make every effort to preserve peace, and I have ever regretted that others, even some of my family, as well as chiefs of other tribes, should have attempted to disturb it. I acknowledge I am not free from faults; and

have you found one in authority who is free? But I have given you so many positive proofs of my desire to repair injuries done by me that I trusted I should secure more of your confidence than I have done. You may therefore suppose I have been exceedingly surprised to hear that because of contemptible and lying reports you have again been led to suppose I wish war. And, you were preparing Griquas and Boers to attack me! I am ready to stand before any evidence which can be produced to prove me guilty. . . . I am also grieved to hear that any of my people should behave with rudeness, or cause the farmers uneasiness, and I cannot but admire the just conclusion you come to as to the cause. It is ignorance. We are ignorant. I would desire to restrain my people, but late events have caused my task to be most difficult."

It was in fact true that Major Warden had changed his tone and attitude to the Chief. He had written to the High Commissioner a series of letters in that sense of which the following are extracts :—

"Should Moshesh refuse to give up the cattle seized from Moroko I purpose crossing his boundary and the troops will make the requisite seizures. . . . The Basuto people are proud and insolent towards their neighbours. . . . The time is not distant, I imagine, when it will be necessary to place them under restraint. . . . The Basuto require humbling, and should such be found necessary it can easily be done and at little cost to Government. The Griquas, Baralong, Mantatis and Korannas with a small British support would in a few days overrun the whole of Basutoland."

To Moshesh he wrote :—

“Depend upon it that, however strong you may imagine yourself to be there is a stronger hand ready to punish the wicked doings of a people ten times more powerful than the Basuto.”

It was plain that he had worked himself up into a state of indignation drifting towards war, and was prepared not only to employ Moshesh's own vassals against him but to sever the alliance of Moirosi by annulling the Basuto sphere of influence over the left bank of the Orange River. The making of boundaries, instead of proving a solution of trouble, had landed the Sovereignty in complete anarchy. The Basuto, realizing the attempts to isolate them, were evidently determined to try and reassert ascendancy over their late tributaries. Free fighting became general, the Boers being drawn into it.

Major Warden then announced to the High Commissioner that there was no alternative but a severe humbling of the Basuto nation, for which purpose he had called out 300 Burghers to co-operate with British troops and native contingents, numbering in all 3,000 men.

Sir Harry Smith in approving the measures wrote :—

“The conduct of the Chiefs Moshesh and Molitsane is most condemnable—especially Moshesh. For his aggressive conduct towards the neighbouring chiefs he merits the course you are pursuing ; but he has been likewise for many months coalescing with the restless Chief Kreli and the Rebel Sandile (in Kaffraria) and

many of his tribe have been engaged against Her Majesty's Forces in several of the recent conflicts . . . but his sons are turbulent men and have that control over their father of which they must as disturbers of the general peace of the Sovereignty be deprived. You are therefore authorized to prosecute the war . . . until those chiefs have made restitution for the spoliation committed on the peaceable and exemplary Chief Moroko (whom I regard as the Paramount Chief in the Sovereignty, from his hereditary descent, his peaceful demeanour and his attachment to the British Government) and on others. . . . You should come to the point with Moshesh and if you have sufficient force attack him at once *if necessary.*"

Sir Harry Smith, finding a new charmer in Moroko, thus had no scruples in renouncing his previous declarations that Moshesh was the Great Paramount Chief, and loosely sanctioning warlike operations. Major Warden was pleased with the approval of his plans and sent the Chief an ultimatum. Both officers had underrated their enemy.





HAIRDRESSING.



## CHAPTER X

The plot thickens against Moshesh who is attacked by Government forces and comes off victorious: the vacillating policy of H.M. Government: removal of Sir Harry Smith and Major Warden, and general disorder

1850—1852

NO doubt the ambitious designs, marauding and reputed insolence of the young chiefs had caused much commotion and tumult in the Sovereignty such as to call forth the displeasure of the British Resident and High Commissioner who, believing Moshesh had absolute power, attributed to him mendacity and deceit without making reasonable allowance for the grievances he laboured under or for the passions which political events had provoked. But faults were not all on one side nor were the Basuto without champions.

Amongst others, the Rev. J. J. Freeman in the year 1850 arrived in Basutoland as a Deputation from the Directors of the London Missionary Society for the purpose of inspection and inquiry. He at once entered the lists against the High Commissioner, voicing a public appeal to the Secretary of State for a Commission of inquiry and investigation and for

suspension of approval of Sovereignty Administration on the grounds that the measures of Sir Harry Smith in reference to the Basuto were :—

1. Essentially and radically unjust on account of the robbery of a large section of country belonging to a friendly, deserving but defenceless people.

2. Ungenerous and cruel.

3. Impolitic, as having rendered the Basuto cold and suspicious—irritated, goaded and maddened them with vexation and disgust.

Sir Harry Smith, in defending himself to the Secretary of State from these strictures upon his procedure, wrote :—

“When society consists of the heterogeneous elements of which it is composed beyond the Orange River, and when opposite interests prefer conflicting claims, that course is the best which contributes best to the general good. The great principle which guided me was, as I have already stated, not to disturb but clearly to define the existing occupation ; and my arrangement has consequently improved the condition of all. With regard to Moshesh, that Chief has been deprived of no part of his territory ; its limits have merely been established, a measure tending as much to his own protection as to that of others. . . . I cannot refrain, my Lord, from adding that if reverend gentlemen in the position of Mr. Freeman would take a comprehensive and not a contracted view of matters . . . a greater degree of benefit would accrue to the parties whom their laudable exertions are intended to civilize.”

The charges levelled by Mr. Freeman at Sir Harry Smith were admittedly extravagant, and the latter's retort about missionaries was not entirely undeserved, for in some instances their partisanship as disclosed in the records had often led to bitter feelings and confusion. But it cannot be denied that Moshesh had been made to concede territory for the Emigrant Boers, and was in addition deprived of land, over which he had fairly asserted his chieftainship, by the granting of independence to and the making of boundaries for minor chiefs who were his tributaries until then. Sir Harry Smith warmly recognized his paramountcy over all the minor chiefs when convenient to do so and then brushed it aside lightly under ill advice without realizing probably what far-reaching consequences it would produce upon the native mind. He would have been better advised to have clung to one strong chief than to trust in a lot of small ones who could not combine and whom he could not support nor protect.

It does not transpire what opinion Her Majesty's Government formed of the correspondence ; but a reflection of their view was seen a few months later by the issue of Letters Patent constituting the whole Sovereignty north of the Orange River, as proclaimed by Sir Harry Smith, into a district under a Government to be administered separately by the Governor and Commander-in-Chief of the Cape of Good Hope, or a Lieutenant-Governor, to be known by the name of the Orange River Territory, with a Legislative Council empowered to make laws for peace, order and good government.

The policy underlying the issue of these Letters Patent may be construed to mean that Her Majesty's Government were not satisfied with the shadowy control hitherto exercised over the Sovereignty and were driven to create a new Government unfettered by Cape laws and usages, with a council nominated by the Crown charged with authority to administer the affairs, not only of the white settlers but of all the native tribes within its jurisdiction. It was a step in the dark soon to be recanted.

The ultimatum alluded to in the previous chapter, and the threats preceding it, were acts of folly considering the insignificant forces available for their execution. It was launched in the following letter from the British Resident to Moshesh.

“PLATBERG, 25 *June*, 1851.

“CHIEF MOSHESH,

“In my two last communications I intimated a desire to see you, but as you have thought proper not to avail yourself of the opportunity of an interview with me it now becomes my duty to make a final demand, viz. :—

“1. The restitution of the stolen property of the Chief Moroko ;

“2. The fine imposed on you for having assisted in the attack made on the Chief Moroko in conjunction with the people of Molitsane ;

“3. The fine imposed on you for having aided the enemies of the Colonial Government on the other side the Orange River in the month of March last ;

“4. The fine imposed on you for the late attack on

the Chief Moroko in his own territory, the attacking party having been headed by your own son Nehemiah ;

“ 5. Restitution of stolen property taken from the Caledon River Burghers ;

“ 6. Restitution of stolen property taken from Mr. Shepstone ;

“ 7. Restitution of stolen property taken from the Platberg people ;

“ 8. Restitution of property taken from the Fingos ;

“ 9. Compensation to the Burghers of Caledon River District for the destruction of their homesteads, gardens and crops.

“ Now, I have therefore to demand of you six thousand good cattle and three hundred horses. With these I may perhaps be able to make good the losses sustained by H.M.'s subjects and her allies. And I further demand that these cattle or horses be delivered to me on or before the 4th July next.

“ (Signed) H. D. WARDEN, British Resident.”

The demand was equally vague and unreasonable seeing that much of the property referred to had been changing hands frequently by counter-reprisals. In any case the time allowed for collection, viz. less than ten days, was so inadequate and the gathering of troops on the border so menacing that the Basuto deemed it of strategic importance, in defence of their main position at Thaba Bosigo, to take up and hold certain salient military points in the foreground of the Caledon River ; further, in order to emasculate Major Warden's force, to coquette with the Boers who formed part of it, in the hope that they would waver

in adhesion to him. A letter was therefore addressed to Wessels, Commandant of the Burghers, in friendly terms, warning him of the consequences to which they were exposed on their solitary farms if they followed the Resident in any hostile movement across the border into Basutoland. These overtures had the desired effect of causing many of the Boers to desert, partly out of fear of reprisals on their farms and partly out of dislike for British methods.

The advance guard of the British came into touch with the Basuto outposts near Mekuatleng some days before the ultimatum expired when Major Donovan in command of the troops, finding the scouts had precipitated a general action, attacked a mountain called Viervoet on which the Basuto were observed in great numbers. His force consisted of 160 Imperial troops and two guns, 120 Burghers, 800 Baralongs under Moroko and a few hundred Griquas and other native levies. Under cover of the guns the position was successfully assaulted, to all appearances. The enemy feigned retreat, allowing the Baralongs to their intense delight to capture an immense herd of cattle which they were about to drive down, after leisurely plundering some villages on the top, when they were surrounded by three bodies of Basuto who assailed them with such vigour that over 150 were immediately killed, the remnant having many wounded falling in disorder upon the supports who were compelled to retire in confusion. The cattle were of course a trap and were recaptured by the owners.

This was a great blow to British prestige. Major Warden attributed the disaster to the failure of so



many of the Boer settlers to obey his commandeering orders to take the field, as well as to desertions, making no secret of their excuse that they preferred Moshesh to the British Government. Failing to get them to rally to him after the reverse, he was under the painful necessity of falling back twenty miles on Thaba Nchu, there taking up a defensive position with the panic-stricken Baralongs clinging to him for food and protection. He then reported the condition of affairs to the High Commissioner and, in a state of alarm, solicited without authority help from Natal; the Governor of that Colony responding in good faith to the requisition, despatched some troops and 1,000 natives, whose services were expensive but valueless.

The general result of these ill-timed operations was to place the Government in a state of siege at Thaba Nchu against the victorious Basuto who traversed the whole country at pleasure, spreading consternation amongst the tribes employed against them, as well as the farmers who had lent their aid to the British. The High Commissioner poured in Minutes of Instructions which were hopelessly wide of the mark, for the Resident was powerless to move or act, British influence everywhere being lost when, after threatening so often, he retired with his forces and accepted defeat.

Recent events moved the French missionaries in Basutoland with evident reluctance then to address an appeal to the Imperial Government for a Commission composed of men capable of ascertaining the real feelings and complaints of the people and determined upon framing measures adapted to the present emergency. Their memorial, extracts of which are given,

represented feelingly but temperately the impressions they had formed from actual knowledge, and gave an eye-witness account of the late fight.

“MEMORIAL

“The French missionaries in Basutoland, after having witnessed near their station of Mekuatleng the most awful scene of bloodshed, feel it their duty to protest against the causes which have changed their once peaceful and happy field of labour into an abode of agitation, of strife and of carnage. Hitherto they have generally abstained from publishing their sentiments on matters of a political nature and have endeavoured to avert the evils they saw in preparation by private correspondence. . . . But there are moments when no consideration . . . can prevent the human breast relieving itself by a shriek of distress. . . . And if whilst hundreds of vultures, preparing to feast on the victims of war, hover above them on one of their stations, the French missionaries remained silent, would they not justly deserve a charge of insensibility to the evil already accomplished, and of indifference to that misery which may still be forthcoming? . . .

“On the 30th of June at daybreak a considerable force composed of Baralongs, Korannas, various other native allies, Boers, Cape Mounted Rifles and English soldiers with artillery made a simultaneous attack on the Bataung under Chief Molitsane and on the Baramokheli subjects of Moshesh near Mekuatleng. The Baramokheli were at first worsted and all their cattle fell into the hands of the Baralongs and Korannas. But very soon after a large body of warriors, headed by the eldest son



Photo by Walsley Robinson.

A KETANE RIVER GORGE.



of Moshesh (Letsie), made their appearance, retook the cattle and cut in pieces a body of Baralong and Korannas who offered resistance. This part of the battle was fought on an extensive flat-topped mountain which is edged with perpendicular rocks. The Basuto, after having thus killed a great number of their opponents on the flat above, drove the rest to near the brink of the precipice. There a desperate struggle took place, the assegai, the battle-axe and the gun making incessant execution . . . those who did not fall by those weapons were hurled down on the awful crags below. At the same moment the British artillery supported by the Cape Mounted Rifles and a large body of natives was repulsed by Molitsane and driven back towards the camp of Major Warden in great confusion. The following morning the British Resident began his retreat to Thaba Nchu.

“We do not intend to discuss the merits of the attack made in this instance by the Government forces. It is in our opinion a fatal continuation of that series of international disputes, desultory fights and promiscuous pillaging which have disturbed and distracted South Africa since the Sovereignty was proclaimed. . . .

“We think there has been an unwarrantable disregard of the rights, the past history, the different habits, the relative position and the respective wants of the native population. This had led the natives to suspect the Government of a disposition to *divide in order to reign*. . . . Natural rights, past grievances, past benefits, past engagements and treaties, feudal allegiances kindred ties, family bonds, have been discarded and overlooked. . . .

“ Moshesh has been placed on a level with chieftains whom he had received in the land. . . . This astounding mode of government has been crowned by employing one tribe against another. . . . A chief who would have had no objection to meet the British Resident personally is filled with indignation by the prospect of finding himself surrounded by men with whom he has been at war in bygone days and who are ready to exult in his humiliation. . . . Limits have been made in the very centre of the territory of Moshesh contrary to the solemn promises made to him in conferences with the highest English authorities. . . . Nothing less than the prospect of irretrievable ruin could prompt us to speak as we do this day. The perversion of the feelings of the people is already frightful. War will drive them completely back to barbarism. No resource remains to them if vanquished than to take refuge in the recesses and strongholds of their mountains. This once accomplished, it may be safely predicted that the Sovereignty will be untenable for civilized men during many years.”

This memorial was undoubtedly partial to the transgressions of Moshesh and his sons ; but it came with weight from men on the spot who were cognisant of every event and well known to be warm advocates of peace. They were correct in pointing to the reaction upon the mass of the native people who had received a bad check in the progress they had shown evident signs of making.

The British Resident was in an unhappy position, having practically retired upon Bloemfontein and lost his personal influence with both the white people now

including many English, and natives. He had to witness silently the vengeance of the Basuto falling upon those Boers and native allies he had called to his help, and to see the domination of Moshesh being riotously restored over his late tributaries.

Sir Harry Smith, too, worried by a Kaffir rebellion in the east of Cape Colony, was much embarrassed by the turn of Sovereignty affairs. He could no longer rely upon the white inhabitants or natives for help or loyalty and saw no alternative but to hold on to Bloemfontein and remain passive until reinforcements from England enabled him to re-establish effectively the authority of Government. Meanwhile he sought to ease the situation by announcing that two Assistant Commissioners, viz. Major Hogge and Mr. Mostyn Owen, sent from England to advise him would proceed to the Sovereignty shortly on a mission of inquiry, "*before the Chief Moshesh is attacked in force.*"

Moshesh also, in spite of gaining the advantage of the late contest, was alarmed for he knew that Sir Harry Smith was too great a warrior to submit long to defeat. Moreover he realized the supreme difficulty of controlling his young sons now inflamed by passion and elated by victory. Casting round for succour, he opened friendly negotiations with the Boers so successfully as to lead to a private treaty between them. It took the form of Declarations as hereunder :—

#### “DECLARATION

“THABA BOSIGO, 3 *Sept.* 1851.

“The great Chief Moshesh declares hereby that from this time he has stopped and caused to cease all

hostile proceedings with the African Burghers, and declares that he makes peace with them, and makes known that he will employ no war or lifting of weapons against them, as long as the Burghers do not come over the Boundary with an armed force to attack him ; and will from this time cause all plunder or thieving to cease, and promises to deliver out the stolen cattle.

“ Mark X of Moshesh.”

“ DECLARATION

“ THABA BOSIGO, 3 *Sept.* 1851.

“ The undersigned hereby declare, as Commissioners of a Deputation of Burghers, with knowledge of the British Resident, to the Chief Moshesh that in case of dispute or fighting among the coloured chiefs or tribes, they will not in such cases take up their weapons against them. The Burghers simply consider themselves obliged to take up their weapons against any chief who makes an invasion or plundering expedition within the boundaries. . . .

“ (Signed) G. F. LINDE,  
 (Signed) JAN VERMAAK.  
 As Commissioners.”

This understanding, on becoming known, together with a communication from the Secretary of State, combined to disturb the mind of the High Commissioner. Lord Grey, from his despatch of September 15, 1851, was evidently much concerned with the state of affairs. He observed that, so far as he could form a judgment from the imperfect information hitherto received, he doubted the prudence and propriety of



the course taken by Major Warden. It should be remembered that Her Majesty's Government, in giving a very reluctant sanction to the measure by which the territory was added to the Queen's dominions, were mainly influenced by definite reports that this was desired by the inhabitants in general who considered the establishment of British authority the only means by which disorder and bloodshed could be prevented. But it was clearly laid down and understood that the course was sanctioned only for the sake of the inhabitants, with no object other than that of meeting their wishes and promoting their welfare, and on the express condition that the whole cost of the arrangements made for this purpose was to be met by those for whose benefit they were intended. The grounds of approval were that the tendency of the measures would be to give more regularity and greater strength to that rude system of government which had grown up of itself, and to provide the people in question the assistance they required for the purpose of settling disputes amongst themselves, by the interposition of an authority to which all the different races of men whom circumstances had brought together in a singular relation with each other might look up with respect. But it was essential that the management of their own concerns, the provision for their own defence and for the expense of that system should be thrown entirely on the Emigrant Boers and on the natives among whom they were settled. Major Warden had not sufficiently borne in mind the nature and extent of the interference Her Majesty's Government were prepared to exercise and had failed to impress upon the inhabitants that

upon them lay the responsibility and duty of maintaining the peace. He appeared to have committed the great error of interfering too much in matters of government and assumed improperly the administration of affairs. Should this error have been committed it must be corrected as speedily as possible. It was absolutely necessary to confine strictly within limits the authority to be exercised by the servants of the Crown. If the inhabitants would not support that authority, but on the contrary desired to be relieved of it, the Resident and forces under him must be withdrawn without delay.

Lord Grey felt, however, that before such a step could be taken with safety and honour it would be necessary to distinctly assert the superiority of the British arms over those by whom they had been resisted, and that the interests of our native allies might be served by providing them with lands sequestered from the Kat River Kaffirs in Kaffraria.

This despatch leaves the impression that Her Majesty's Government experienced no misgivings about extending British rule over the Sovereignty and painting the country red so long as it would cost nothing. It lost sight of the fact that Sir Harry Smith's Proclamation, published eighteen months earlier, clearly contemplated an organized form of government by the Crown.

It is idle to suppose that the "interposition of authority" alluded to could have meant anything less than Imperial control as commonly understood. Having once assumed the liability, which his Pro-

clamation clearly did, the High Commissioner could not withdraw. Every act committed by him in good faith hoping to mend matters, acts approved at times by the Secretary of State, sunk him deeper in the mire. If half-measures only were intended, he had been allowed for a long time to proceed unchecked with an impossible task. He could not be dissociated in the responsibility from Major Warden who had kept him fully informed, and upon whom therefore it was unfair, whether he was capable or not, to cast the entire blame. He had, poor man, pathetically offered to surrender half a year's salary if it could be the means of restoring peace. Finally, Her Majesty's Government were prepared to abandon their high-principled policy and retire from the Sovereignty, *after* vindicating the national prestige by asserting the superiority of British arms over those Boers and natives who had resisted ; that is to say, the High Commissioner was prompted to conduct expensive military operations which, if effective, were bound to carry him into the heart of Basutoland, and to saddle him with obligations to protect afterwards those whites and blacks who should respond loyally in terms of the law to his summons for aid and be left in a helpless plight at the mercy of avengers under no curb.

However much Sir Harry Smith smarted under this reversal of his policy his impetuous nature and reputation as a soldier urged him to follow up the injunctions of the Secretary of State in exacting redress. But he was crippled by want of men and money, with the knowledge that the Imperial Government had no confidence in Warden's fitness to deal with the situation

and that the Boer-Basuto coalition, such as it was, would deter many of the Emigrant Farmers from lending him assistance.

In order to gain time for preparations and reinforcements, the Assistant Commissioners Hogge and Owen were pushed up to the Sovereignty in December 1851, there to be inundated on arrival with representations from the different factions of all colours. Having to all appearances a free hand and an open mind they immediately set about to reduce expenses and make their authority felt. First of all declining to sanction some proceedings of the British Resident unfairly directed against Moshesh of employing mercenaries to worry him into violence by pillaging his people in outlying villages, they then took up a decided stand against political missionaries, writing to the Rev. Mr. Cameron of Thaba Nchu whose active interference annoyed them as follows :—

“The Assistant Commissioners were under an impression, perhaps a mistaken one, that the Wesleyan missionaries confined themselves as a rule to the sphere of their pastoral exertions. They recommend Mr. Cameron to adopt this course for the future.”

Next, they administered through the High Commissioner what can only be regarded as a stern rebuke to the Secretary of State for his hasty resolution productive as it was bound to be of grave unsettlement. Concluding a most practical report they observed :—

“The Assistant Commissioners are fully aware that, however rapid may have been its advance, a great

nation cannot retreat from a territory over which it has assumed sovereign rights without great caution and a due consideration of the interests involved. They will in the course of their investigation carefully weigh every circumstance, which may tend to prove that the retirement, which Your Excellency so much deprecates, is as inexpedient as it must be lamentable in its consequences to the inhabitants of every colour and denomination."

Messrs. Hogge and Owen made early arrangements for a meeting with Moshesh with whom they were prepared to come to terms if possible, involving his complete submission, and then, according to instructions but contrary to their convictions, to allow the native tribes to arrange their own affairs and fight their own battles. The Chief was called to confer with them at Winburg but, apprehensive of treachery along the road at the hands of Sikonyela, was forbidden by his own people to go, his sons Molapo and David Masupha being substituted with plenipotentiary power to consent in his name to any agreement. Accordingly, they together with Molitsane signed an agreement, afterwards confirmed by Moshesh, in the following terms :—

" WINBURG, 10 *February*, 1852.

" We the undersigned, acting with full powers in the name of Moshesh, promise faithfully to comply in every respect with the terms Her Majesty's Assistant Commissioners have imposed on us, viz. :—

" To give up all cattle and horses stolen from the Boers within fourteen days from this date, and to

indemnify in full the said Boers for any that may be missing or have been made away with.

“Also to compensate the Baralong Chief Moroko for all the cattle and horses he lost while serving on the Commando with Major Warden in September 1850.

“Any cattle that may have been taken since September 1850 by the Baralongs shall be considered as an off-set in the payment to them above specified.

“I, Molitsane, also bind myself in every way to comply with the same terms.

“Mark X of Molapo.

Mark X of David Masupha.

Mark X of Molitsane.”

This was another of those vague undertakings almost impossible of fulfilment because of its indefinite character. It imposed a burden to which even a highly organized Government was unequal, viz. the collection within a few days of unknown quantities of cattle that might or might not be secreted in the recesses of a wild country hard to penetrate. As the Agreement was not complied with, Major Hogge met Moshesh personally at the Orange River on the 22nd February in the presence of large numbers of Basuto with the object of making known the views of Government and effecting a compromise if possible.

On that occasion, after much evidence, he announced as the authoritative decision of himself and his colleague that the Administration had committed great faults against the Basuto, whose well-founded grievances he was prepared to redress; he was in a position to say that Major Warden would be dismissed from the office

of British Resident ; that the boundary line between the Lesuto and the Caledon River District, as confirmed by the High Commissioner, would be no longer binding ; that all the boundary lines proclaimed between the minor clans and the Basuto would be abolished ; that Captain Baillie, accused of murder, seizing, bartering and enslaving sixty Tambookie children, should be arrested and the children restored ; and that henceforth the Government would not interfere in purely native quarrels.

In exchange for all this, Moshesh was simply to surrender *in toto* all plunder mentioned in the Winburg Agreement and to consent to a new line between himself and the Emigrant Farmers.

This was in fact a violent *volte-face*. It meant almost a return to the *status quo ante*. The offer of such favourable terms to the Basuto after admitting the justice of their grievances was almost enough to intoxicate them. Whilst professing their gratitude they were induced, in view of past experience about promises, to wait and see how far Major Hogge was able and willing to carry out his pledges. As a matter of fact, the Assistant Commissioner, whose sincerity cannot be questioned, found himself unable to manifest it by carrying out one of them. Meanwhile the Basuto as an earnest on their part offered and gave up hundreds of cattle gradually recovered ; but they were wanted in thousands instead of hundreds and the demand came again and again for more. There was, however, nothing unreasonable in the dilatory response. Here were two parties to an understanding, the one representing a great civilized nation, the other

a wild and suspicious people : if the one failed in its contract the example was bad and the failure of the other excusable. Moreover, there was grave doubt that the demands were excessive, as both the Boers and Moroko had intermittently recovered some of their losses, and above all there was a lack of consistency in Imperial policy which neither satisfied nor convinced any one that it would be backed up.

Some time now passed with the exchange of recriminating correspondence in every direction. Moshesh was charged with wily and evasive tactics, retorting that he had done his best to preserve peace and perform his engagements but had been cruelly pressed to make good thousands of cattle and horses, many of which his people had never seen, and further that he was girt about with enemies paid by the Government to harass him. He instanced the conduct of a desperate character named Van der Kolf who with a band of brigands roved about the country stealing and levying toll of cattle from farmers and natives and then falsely circulating reports that the Basuto had done it.

This man Van der Kolf was at a later date run down by a Boer Commandant of good repute who had watched his villainous career and, according to report, shot him dead on the veldt as a pest to humanity.

Whilst communications were going on, Sikonyela, encouraged by the British Resident, by whom he and others known as allies were supplied with guns and ammunition, seized the opportunity to make a sudden raid on the Basuto, killing some unprotected men and sweeping off to the shelter of British camps a column of cattle. Moshesh in desperation headed in person a





ON THE ROAD TO MARHALLING,



commando of his own in May 1852 against the Batlokoa, inflicting such punishment that they were glad to come to terms, Sikonyela with much difficulty escaping with his life.

Then, a series of changes came over the scene. Major Hogge, after performing an immense amount of work, died. The Secretary of State signified his desire to place in other hands the authority hitherto entrusted to Major Warden, who in his opinion had entered rashly and hastily upon the war with Moshesh and in whose judgment and prudence he had not reason to be satisfied. He was succeeded as British Resident by Commissary-General Green.

To crown all, the Secretary of State expressed his dissatisfaction with the administrative policy of Sir Harry Smith who was censured and recalled, to be succeeded by General Sir George Cathcart. Simultaneously a change of Government in England brought Sir John Pakington to the Colonial Office.

The Assistant Commissioners, describing the condition of affairs as one of muddle and disorder, laid before the new High Commissioner a comprehensive view of the Sovereignty history together with their opinion, the prevailing note of which was that they did not believe the Basuto would fulfil the engagements into which they had entered unless compelled to do so by force, seeing that no trust could be placed in Moshesh, with whom further correspondence was useless.

It is not on record that the pledges made by Major Hogge were reported to the High Commissioners or given any serious consideration.

## CHAPTER XI

Terror is not always the effect of force ; and an armament is not a victory. If you do not succeed, you are without resource ; for, conciliation failing, force remains ; but, force failing, no further hope of reconciliation is left.

BURKE.

**Sir George Cathcart, the new Governor, is impulsive : under-  
rates the Basuto : sends an ultimatum : invades Basuto-  
land and comes off second best : the battle of Berea.**

SIR GEORGE CATHCART succeeded to a burdensome heritage but entered upon his duties apparently with a light heart. He issued two or three casual Proclamations, wrote a few letters, commendatory and advisory, to Moshesh and others, and then assured the Secretary of State hopefully as his predecessors had done that the native chiefs evinced a readiness to comply with his demands. He was naturally influenced by the opinions of his Political Officer, Owen, and the British Resident, Green. The former held consistently to the view that the Orange River Sovereignty could not be retained with dignity to the Crown without the presence of a considerable force, recommending that, should Her Majesty's Government decline to maintain it at the risk of incurring expense, abandonment should follow as soon as it could be done with honour. The latter

was more emphatic : assuming that peace could never be established until Moshesh was humbled, he advised that if an additional military force were to be employed for such a purpose it should consist chiefly of cavalry and the Burghers, 800 of whom could be called out as well as 300 mounted Griquas as auxiliaries ; other native aid to be relied upon consisted of : Bastards, 150 mounted ; Taaibosch's Korannas, 100 ditto ; Sikonyela's men, 600 foot ; Moroko's, 300 ditto.

To these communications Sir George Cathcart replied, "If I make war on Moshesh, it must be on good grounds and a well-established *casus belli*, and then it must be no small war." He then intimated in despatches of November 14, 1852, written from Grahamstown to the Secretary of State, his intention to proceed without delay to the Sovereignty, with the object of enforcing Her Majesty's authority and control over any native chief or other party who might be refractory ; for that purpose to take a sufficient British force, viz. 2,000 Infantry, 2 guns, 500 Cavalry, so that no necessity would exist for calling to his assistance either petty native tribes, Burghers or Griquas or Korannas, and thereby sowing seeds of future discord similar to that which had been previously engendered by the unfortunate employment of such auxiliaries who, if so employed, naturally demanded for the obligation permanent protection afterwards.

This policy of condemning the intervention and aid of local auxiliaries was in direct conflict with that of Sir Harry Smith and of the British Resident Green. Had it been adhered to, much trouble and

future complication would have been avoided. It will be seen later that General Cathcart went back on his laudable intentions because, like others who preceded him, he fell into the error of underrating the opposition he was likely to encounter and overrating the capacity of Imperial troops limited in number to carry war against a formidable enemy at a great distance from their base whilst called upon to hold a long line of communications. In the course of a long summary of past events and the present position of the Sovereignty, addressed to the Secretary of State for the information of H.M. Government, he centred his remarks on Moshesh, the following extracts relating particularly to that Chief and the adjustment of affairs in which he was concerned :—

“ . . . Moshesh . . . by his own energy and enterprise . . . managed ultimately, out of the wreck of petty nations, to become a centre of aggregation . . . selecting a well chosen and defensible mountain fastness, Thaba Bosigo, as his seat of government. . . . So plausible are the excuses for the acts of aggression committed by his people against his neighbours, and so ably set forth are instances of his forbearance and moderation, that there is scarcely anything tangible as a cause of quarrel. . . . It is but just to admit that, from the earliest period of any official recognition or even knowledge of the Chief Moshesh as the paramount ruler of the Basuto, that Chief, though engaged in constant quarrels with his neighbours, never came into collision with Her Majesty's troops, but, on the contrary, refused all solicitations to join the Boers

in their rebellion, which was terminated by the battle of Boomplaats, and his conduct on that occasion was duly acknowledged as that of a faithful ally.

“But, you are aware, since that event Major Warden, the late Resident . . . took occasion of some recent forays and reprisals . . . to call upon some weak native auxiliaries and loyal burghers . . . in support of the feeble escort of regular troops . . . and with this inadequate force commenced a little war against the great Chief. The result was . . . humiliating, and has unfortunately left a disadvantageous impression in that quarter as to the real power of the British nation. Her Majesty's Assistant Commissioners visited Moshesh and . . . considering it their duty to call that Chief to account . . . they drew out a document . . . demanding reparation which Moshesh assented to. . . .

“It is to be regretted that the terms of the demand then made . . . were so vaguely worded, no precise amount of fine having been named, that not only were they open to evasion but scarcely capable of being complied with without engendering fresh disputes . . . between parties with whom it was desired that an equitable adjustment should be made, and consequently the Chief has only partially fulfilled his engagement. . . . Recent reports . . . show that the same unfortunate state of things in respect to plunder between Moshesh and his neighbours still prevails and . . . it is difficult . . . to judge on which side the primary aggression originated. . . .

“So convinced am I . . . that it is my imperative duty to proceed thither . . . and administer strict

justice with a strong arm, in vindication of the Sovereign honour and authority. Whatever may be the policy ultimately adopted . . . British authority having once been asserted, it could neither be retained nor abandoned with honour in the present unsatisfactory state of things. . . . The object however of this intended expedition is not necessarily for war, but for the establishment of peace. . . . The duty . . . I consider to be :—

“First, after due investigation on the spot, to fix and define the equitable amount of compensation due by the Chief Moshesh, and then exact . . . prompt payment. Secondly, to adjust all other claims . . . as to boundaries between Chiefs, and compensation for their mutual reprisals. . . . Thirdly, to declare certain definite fines as cautionary penalties for the infringement of such injunctions as I may see cause to leave, in order to guard against future irregularities. . . .”

To carry through only a fraction of this portentous programme would have required several months, exclusive of time employed in fighting. Had Moshesh drafted the despatch himself he could not have put his own defence better ; he was declared to have been loyal ; there was no tangible cause of quarrel : it was not practicable to comply with demands so vaguely worded ; he had partly fulfilled his engagements and had always solicited investigation on the spot to ascertain the true facts.

General Cathcart reached Burghersdorp on November 27, 1852, where he wrote to Sir John Pakington detailing the force under him to be :—



“Royal Artillery : 1 demi battery horsed : 2 demi rocket batteries. Rank and file : 12th Lancers, 202 ; Cape Mounted Rifles, 250 ; Queen’s, 400 ; 74th Regt., 400 ; 43rd Regt., 320 ; 73rd Regt., 330 ; Rifle Brigade, 100.”

He added that the force assembled both in respect to commanders and men was as perfect as he could desire and sufficient for all purposes ; and that should Moshesh prefer the issue of battle to restitution on a scale to be estimated by the Assistant Commissioners, it might be necessary to take it and in any case destroy the citadel : whilst, should resistance be offered, all his enemies should be let loose upon him and the mountains no longer be a shelter for his cattle.

It was plain that Sir George Cathcart, while admitting there was room for misunderstanding and professing not to prejudge the case, had in effect done so. Neither the Assistant Commissioners nor any other persons were competent from personal knowledge to frame a true estimate of the actual losses for which damages were to be claimed. The Chief had restored a lot, some through official channels, some independently, and much had been retaken in reprisals. A full investigation on the spot might have determined a good deal, but to complete it thoroughly would have required a prolonged expenditure of labour and forbearance. Time however, with over two thousand soldiers eager for fighting, was too precious to be frittered away in hearing evidence : the fates were against it.

General Cathcart arrived on the frontier of Basuto-

land early in December, and at once summoned Moshesh to meet him at Platberg on the Caledon River on the 13th. That day the river dividing them was in dangerous flood impossible for the Chief to ford : but—and it reads like a page from a story of chivalry in the middle ages—two of his sons pluckily swam through the flood to explain the cause of their father's detention and plead for him. The General refused to receive them on his behalf, and next day having made up his mind that with an expensive army in the field a three days' ultimatum was the appropriate solution, sent it in the form of a letter that rendered any chance of investigation or parley hopeless.

*Letter from* GOVERNOR SIR GEORGE CATHCART  
to CHIEF MOSHESH

“PLATBERG, 14 December, 1852.

“CHIEF MOSHESH,

“When I was sent by the Queen to be Governor and to command her army in this part of the world, about six months past, I wrote to acquaint you and other Chiefs, and I told you I would visit you as soon as the rebellion of the Gaikas and the Tambookies and the Hottentots was ended. This has been done as you have no doubt learnt ; and I am now come to visit this country, and desire to see you and the other chiefs as my friends at my camp at Platberg without delay.

“My Proclamation will have told you the righteous cause in which I come and what it is my duty to do.

“As I told you in my letter, I hope my visit to you may be in peace ; but I must do justice, whether it be

by war or in peace. I have been told that you are a great Chief and a good man ; but I find that though you are a man of good words, you have not done what you promised. I find, not only that you have not paid the fine of cattle imposed on you by the Assistant Commissioners, and which you promised to pay, for the robberies of cattle and horses committed by your people and with your knowledge up to the time of your agreement with them, but since then you and the people over whom you rule, including Molitsane and Moirosi, and your own son Letsie and certain robbers called Letele and Poshudi, have been stealing cattle from your neighbours, and otherwise doing them harm ; even murders have been committed by them, and this village has been plundered and destroyed. In short, the Basuto people under your rule have become a nation of thieves. This state of things must not be, and I have come to put an end to it, and to restore peace between you and your neighbours, if I can ; and if not, to put you and your people out of the way of doing them wrong, and this I must do promptly.

“ I will not therefore stop to talk, but tell you now once for all, that having carefully inquired into the business, and judging as mercifully and justly as I can what is the amount of cattle and damage you should be required to restore, I demand of you ten thousand head of cattle and one thousand horses, to be delivered over to the British Resident at this place within three days' time, in order to be restored to those from whom they have been stolen.

“ If this be not done I must go and take either cattle or other things from you and your people, and

from Molitsane and his people ; and if resistance be made it will then be war between us, and I must then take three times the amount of cattle, as well as kill many of your people and destroy their kralls, which I should be very sorry to be obliged to do ; but if this cattle be paid within three days, and I am assured that peace is restored, I will take the army back again in peace.

“ Now, Chief, if you are an honest man, it is for you to pay the just fine, which is not more than the cattle stolen, and save yourself and your people from ruin, or else prepare for war, for on the fourth day I must bring you to account.

“ You must also pay back to Sikonyela what you have stolen from him and be at peace with him. Carolus Baatje and his people must return to Platberg, and the boundaries fixed by Governor Sir Harry Smith must be respected.

“ When all this is done, you must remain at peace with all your neighbours, and the Basutos must cease to be a nation of thieves, for if I come again it will not be to talk, but to make an end of the Basuto nation as has been done of the Gaikas and the Tambookie tribe of Mapassa.

“(Signed) GEO. CATHCART,

“Governor and High Commissioner.”

This letter reversed without comment the pledges of Major Hogge given in the Queen's name ; it falsified any idea of dispensing strict justice after investigation in the manner suggested in the High Commissioner's magnanimous despatches ; it acknow-

ledged Moshesh's rule over Moirosi which Sir Harry Smith had denied. It was virtually judgment without trial, for the accused were not even allowed to state their case, and were ordered to pay a fine valued at £50,000 for damage assessed by the Assistant Commissioners at £25,000, which latter amount General Cathcart afterwards admitted to be absurdly excessive.

The position was quickly grasped by Moshesh, who now knew for certain that, in addition to the formidable army camped within sight of his home evidently bent on war, enemies of smaller calibre were yapping all round ready to spring at him directly he was securely in the grip of the soldiers. Like a stag at bay he stood with his sons resolutely facing the crowd of adversaries—in a sorry plight, yet full of that mettle which never fails to command admiration. But, before the clash of arms when it seemed almost certain they must bow to defeat, he sought and obtained one personal interview with the General. The record of it is remarkable for brevity and directness of speech.

MINUTE OF CONFERENCE BETWEEN GOVERNOR  
SIR GEORGE CATHCART AND MOSHESH

*December 15, 1852.*

GOVERNOR. I am glad to see you and make your acquaintance.

MOSHESH. I am glad to see the Governor, as since his arrival in this country I have been expecting a visit from him, which his letter to me in October has led me to expect.

GOVERNOR. I told you in that letter that I hoped

to meet you in peace, and I still hope so, as I look to you as the great Chief in this part.

MOSHESH. I hope so too, for peace is like the rain which makes the grass grow, while war is like the wind which dries it up. You are right in looking to me, that is in accordance with the treaties.

GOVERNOR. I will not now talk much, but wish to know whether you received my message yesterday, in which I made the demand of cattle and horses. I have nothing to alter in that letter.

MOSHESH. I received the letter, but do not know where I shall get the cattle from. Am I to understand that the ten thousand head demanded are a fine imposed for the thefts committed by my people, in addition to the cattle stolen?

GOVERNOR. I demand but ten thousand head, though your people have stolen many more, and consider this a just award which must be paid in three days.

MOSHESH. Do the three days count from yesterday or to-day?

GOVERNOR. To-day is the first of the three.

MOSHESH. The time is short and the cattle many. Will you not allow me six days to collect them?

GOVERNOR. You had time given you when Major Hogge and Mr. Owen made the first demand, and then promised to comply with it but did not.

MOSHESH. But I was not quite idle. Do not the papers in the Commissioner's hands show that I collected them?

GOVERNOR. They do, but not half of the number demanded.

MOSHESH. That is true ; but I have not now control enough over my people to induce them to comply with the demand, however anxious I may be to do so.

GOVERNOR. If you are not able to collect them, I must go and do it ; and if any resistance be made it will then be war, and I shall not be satisfied with ten thousand head but shall take all I can.

MOSHESH. Do not talk of war, for, however anxious I may be to avoid it, you know that a dog when beaten will show his teeth.

GOVERNOR. It will therefore be better that you should give up the cattle than that I should go for them.

MOSHESH. I wish for peace ; but have the same difficulty with my people that you have in the Cape Colony. Your prisons are never empty, and I have thieves among my people.

GOVERNOR. I would then recommend you to catch the thieves and bring them to me, and I will hang them.

MOSHESH. I do not wish you to hang them, but to talk to them and give them advice. If you hang them they cannot talk.

GOVERNOR. If I hang them they cannot steal, and I am not going to talk any more. I have said that if you do not give up the cattle in three days I must come and take them.

MOSHESH. I beg you not to talk of war.

GOVERNOR. I have no more to say. I must either leave this in peace in three days or go to Thaba Bosigo. I therefore advise you to go and collect the cattle as quickly as possible.

MOSHESH. Do not talk of coming to Thaba Bosigo. If you do I shall lay the blame on the Boers from whom the cattle were stolen, and whom I requested to come and point out to me their cattle that I might restore them. I will go at once and do my best, and perhaps God will help me.

This interview availed the Chief nothing. The die was cast. But he made a final request before parting that the day of conference should not count as one of the three days. This was granted and he then returned rapidly to his mountain home. On the third day Nehemiah, one of his senior sons, drove into the General's camp 3,500 head of cattle, which were received and distributed as follows : 1,000 to Moroko, 250 to Gert Taaibosch, 250 to Carolus Baatje, and the remainder to the Imperial Commissariat. None appear to have been awarded to the Boer farmers who were alleged to have been the chief sufferers.

It might have been expected that the General would have adhered to his oft-expressed resolves to conduct operations with his own compact body of troops only, and not enlist the aid of native auxiliaries at the cost of future discord which their employment would certainly engender. But he did nothing of the sort. Before a shot was fired, before it was known whether the fine would be paid or not, whether it would be peace or war, he supplied the Batlokoa, the most uncompromising enemies of the Basuto, with arms and ammunition, telling Sikonyela in a published letter dated December 17 he did not wish to set one chief against another yet demanding his assistance if there was fighting ;



and he called upon Moroko to place a string of guards extended between his camp and Bloemfontein in order to protect his line of communication from attack.

Sir George Cathcart was by common report led to think that Moshesh could, had he wished, easily have paid up within three days not only 10,000 cattle and 1,000 horses but three times those numbers. There is every reason, however, to believe that it was not possible for him to do so. To have raised in three days many more than the 3,500 surrendered he must have swept off summarily the entire herds of his followers living near. This would have meant alienating their attachment and that he dared not do on the verge of war. Their only wealth was cattle for which they were always ready to die in defending. There were considerable herds spread over the territory of 10,000 square miles; but the numbers within the power of the Chief to handle were grossly exaggerated. One of the French missionaries escorted messengers to report that great efforts were being made to collect the fine and to entreat for more time. No answer was given, so the Basuto were led to expect a final notice before fighting commenced.

But, as no more cattle appeared, General Cathcart was inexorable and on December 19 issued orders for an immediate advance, the troops crossing the Caledon river into Basutoland at daybreak on the morning of the 20th at a drift almost directly opposite Thaba Bosigo distant therefrom about twelve miles. Leaving the Head-quarter camp strongly entrenched and the eighty-mile line of communication to Bloemfontein to

be held by Moroko's Baralongs, the troops marched in a direct line towards the fortress at Thaba Bosigo, formed in three columns for a concerted movement, one under personal observation of the General himself, the other two commanded respectively by Col. George Napier and Col. William Eyre of the 73rd Regiment. The divisional orders set forth that the object was to chastise the chief Moshesh and capture cattle.

Directly across the line of march there lay the Berea, a long, narrow flat-topped mountain of irregular shape with precipitous sides broken through in one or two places by tortuous passes closed up at the crest almost in the form of gateways. The plan of campaign was for the army to take this mountain in its stride, the column under Col. Napier, mostly cavalry, to work round the left or north-eastern corner to connect with that under the General who took the right or western side, whilst the centre column under Col. Eyre should ascend the heights, traverse the mountain and effect a junction at midday with the other columns on the far side, driving in front of him a large herd of cattle exposed to view on the top.

General Cathcart proceeded almost unmolested to the proposed point of junction within sight of the Mission Station nestling under the brows of Thaba Bosigo upon the banks of the Little Caledon river. The other two columns, according to the official reports, were tempted by the sight of cattle to vary their instructions, and not only failed to rendezvous at the time and place appointed but got into serious difficulties which entailed considerable loss.

Lancers  
Gap.



Barra  
Mountain.

Photo by J. R. Mcg.

RACECOURSE, MASERU, LANCERS' GAP ON THE HORIZON.



Col. Napier observed going up a steep cattle path winding through one of the passes a large drove which he promptly followed with his whole force, secured, and was leisurely driving down when a body of Basuto, watching their opportunity when soldiers and cattle were well mixed up in the pass, charged down upon them so fiercely that a troop of the 12th Lancers was nearly wiped out, another small party of Lancers getting into a *cul de sac* by mistake being entirely destroyed. Col. Napier with great difficulty released his column from the perilous position. He was compelled, however, to abandon the route indicated in his orders and, instead of linking up with the other columns, fell back in some confusion to the main camp on the Caledon he had started from in the early morning, pursued for several miles and attacked in flank by the Basuto who made frantic efforts to recover a herd of two or three thousand cattle driven along by the troops. Eventually the column recrossed the Caledon with the assistance of a company of the 74th Highlanders pushed forward to cover the retreat, having lost during the day thirty men killed of whom twenty-seven were Lancers.

Col. Eyre, following his instructions to cross the mountain, stormed it bravely in the face of opposition. Gaining the crest with little loss, he found the enemy dispersing in all directions, apparently disheartened, leaving in their flight a large mob of cattle which he proceeded to round up and drive off when a strong force of Basuto under Molapo, some of them wearing white caps and bearing lances just seized from those of the 12th Lancers who had been killed on the other

side, suddenly appeared in front, and dashing in plunged the column into confusion. Captain Faunce of the 73rd and three soldiers mistaking the enemy in white caps for Lancers, were taken prisoners and at once killed and mutilated in revenge for the death of some native women accidentally shot, it was supposed, by the soldiers. Col. Eyre extricated his men only with great difficulty, descending after a running fight to the plain below, whence he joined General Cathcart at the appointed place about sunset, bringing in several hundred cattle as the result of his day's work.

General Cathcart was during that night far from comfortable. He was attacked at intervals while in bivouac in some old kralls, was cut adrift from Napier's cavalry column, his communications were dangerously threatened and supplies limited. The day's casualty list was 38 killed and 15 wounded; that of the enemy, though reported to have been heavy, was afterwards stated not to have exceeded twenty, but probably both dead and wounded were carried off by the natives. The whole affair was a repetition of the old error of underrating the adversary and ignoring experience, for the cattle had been merely snares, as they were to Major Donovan at Viervoet.

In his published despatches and papers, General Cathcart complained of having been left in the lurch by his column commanders who went mad after cattle in despite of his orders which were to make reconnaissances in force and unite with him under Moshesh's mountain. "They are both fine fellows," he wrote;

“but soldiers will easily see that the fault is not mine that we did not make a better job of it. It was madness of Napier to take his cavalry up a mountain five or six hundred feet high faced like Salisbury Craig and up which there are not above two or three passes practicable for horses. They seem to have run wild after cattle; and the Lancers who were rearguard got into a mess by trying to get down the mountain side by a watercourse which they took for a path and met them in a fix. If Eyre and Napier had done what they were bid they would have met me about noon and we should have smitten the Philistines more severely.”

When the morning of December 21 broke, General Cathcart promptly concluded that it would be madness to follow up his threats to strike at Thaba Bosigo, a fortress mountain, with a diminished force, in view of the fact that his whole force had failed to make any serious impression upon a single division of the Basuto. His only alternative was to fall back on his entrenched camp at the Caledon river, mortified as he and his troops must have been at the thought that the bodies of their comrades killed the day before lay unburied on the Berea mountain. (The bodies of Captain Faunce and nineteen others were afterwards discovered and interred by Mr. Mostyn Owen and one of the French missionaries assisted by a party of natives readily sent by Moshesh under his sons Masupha and Nehemiah. It transpired that the life of Captain Faunce would have been spared but that some native women had, it was rumoured, been bayoneted by the soldiers: whereupon one of their

relatives, a hunchback dwarf, struck the officer dead with a blow from a knob-kerrie.)

The General therefore carried out a retirement, taking open country, whilst the Basuto in strong force made a parallel movement of observation only along the summit of the Berea mountain. Just as the British column sighted the Caledon camp an envoy approached from the rear carrying a flag of truce with a letter from Moshesh. This characteristic and clever epistle, written at the Chief's dictation the night of the 20th, ran as follows :—

*From the CHIEF MOSHESH to the HIGH COMMISSIONER*

“THABA BOSIGO,  
“*Midnight, 20 Dec. 1852.*”

“YOUR EXCELLENCY,

“This day you have fought against my people and taken much cattle. As the object for which you have come is to have a compensation for Boers, I beg you will be satisfied with what you have taken. I entreat peace from you,—you have shown your power,—you have chastised,—let it be enough I pray you ; and let me be no longer considered an enemy to the Queen. I will try all I can to keep my people in order in the future.

“Your humble servant,

“(Signed) MOSHESH.”

The fact was that both Generals were sincerely anxious to find a way out of their dilemma and an excuse to call it “Peace.” Moshesh had spent a



miserable night. He was conscious of victory and dreaded its consequences more than defeat. Every time he saw one of his warriors decked in the garments of a Lancer it must have sent a pang through him, for he knew that the memory of the dead soldiers on the mountain, mutilated probably by his wild people against his wishes, would assuredly yield a harvest of vengeance from all white people, who abhorred the idea that blacks should prevail against whites. Yet, it was a fair enough fight to which no exception was or could be taken. Still, the Chief was stirred with the instinct that nothing but an heroic measure could save him from retribution at the hands of the British with whom at all times he wanted to be friendly, for he believed they meant well though their methods were strange. In the dead of night he roused his missionary, M. Casalis, in whose presence he ordered his educated son Nehemiah to write down the inspired words of the letter. The inspiration was that he should accord to General Cathcart the honours of the day, admit chastisement and render homage.

The honeyed letter hit the mark. Sir George Cathcart was already sick of his experiences. He was miraculously given a loophole of escape from a grave position as well as the opportunity to pose as a conqueror and transfer the burden of the future to others. His reply, penned apparently with nervous haste in sight of the astonished envoy, shows how little he understood the ways of natives or the danger of using ultimatums and threats unless they are followed up in their entirety and all defiance is effectually crushed.

*From* SIR GEORGE CATHCART *to the* CHIEF  
MOSHESH

"CAMP, CALEDON RIVER,  
"December 21, 1852.

"CHIEF MOSHESH,

"I have received your letter. The words are those of a Great Chief, and of one who has the interests of his people at heart. But I care little for words; I judge of men by their actions. I told you that if you did not pay the fine I must go and take it. I am a man who never breaks his word, otherwise the Queen would not have sent me here. I have taken the fine by force, and I am satisfied. I am not angry with your people for fighting in defence of their property; for those who fought, and fought well, were not all of them thieves, and I am sorry that many were killed. This is your fault, for if you had paid the fine, it would not have happened. I now desire not to consider you, Chief, as an enemy of the Queen, but I must proclaim Martial Law in the Sovereignty to give to Commandants and Field-Cornets power to make commandos in a regular manner, and, with the consent of the Resident, enter your country in search of plundered horses and cattle that may be stolen after this time. And I expect you to assist them; for though you are a great Chief, it seems that you either do not or cannot keep your own people from stealing; and among the cattle you sent as part of your fine there were three oxen, the property of Mr. Bain of Bloemfontein, stolen since I crossed the Caledon River. Now, therefore, Chief Moshesh, I consider your past obligations fulfilled, and hope that

you will take measures for preventing such abuses in future. In the meantime as the Queen's Representative, I subscribe myself, Your Friend

“(Signed) GEO. CATHCART, GOVERNOR.

“P.S. Chief! I shall be glad to see either yourself or your sons in the same friendly manner and in the same good faith as before the fight, at Platberg to-morrow or next day, but I shall now send away the army, and go back to the Colony in a few days' time.

“(Initial ed) G. C.”

This reply has been considered in some quarters as a magnanimous act prompted by the genuine admiration of a brave man for a brave foe. However that may be, the eagerness with which it was returned and the actual result of the operations produced together a misleading effect upon the minds of the Basuto. It led them to feel that they were capable of beating a powerful army of white men—that they had in fact done so—and then relieved themselves of the consequences by *finesse*. It did much to turn their heads, exciting the vanity and bravado of the younger chiefs in a fashion that induced them to engage lightly in struggles for many years with more crafty foes than the British. Some of the statements in the letter were also erroneous; it was not correct to say that many Basuto had been killed, or that the fine had been captured or that Moshesh had acquitted himself of the demands. Such statements could only be interpreted by the Basuto and by the native allies as weakness. For instance, Carolus Baatje, leader of

the Bastards, on hearing the news wrote an embittered letter voicing the feelings of the allies, alleging that they had been betrayed by their loyalty to the Queen and expressing the hope that the Government would give effect to the requirements of justice rather than conform to the dictates of expediency.

The precipitate action of Sir George Cathcart also at once drew a dignified remonstrance from Assistant Commissioner Owen, who protested warmly that he as Political Officer had not been consulted, and recorded his unqualified dissent from a course calculated not only to throw discredit upon British authority throughout South Africa but also to prolong the present contest. The reasons for his protest ran as follows :—

“ 1. In that, attempting to enforce the payment of the penalty imposed on Moshesh by Your Excellency, the British troops have been resisted by a large Basuto force, having retired with severe loss, leaving upwards of forty men on the field with most of their arms, accoutrements and horses, which no doubt according to native custom will be paraded as trophies of their power before the other tribes, as was yesterday done in front of our troops, in the hands of the enemy,—besides an officer taken prisoner and afterwards, as there is too good reason to believe, butchered, while Thaba Bosigo, Moshesh’s stronghold, has not been reached, nor has the amount of the original penalty been captured.

“ 2. I am fully convinced that Moshesh is not sincere in his professed desire for peace, which I believe

to be a mere ruse on his part to gain time to mature his plans for more complete organization. I feel borne out in this conviction from the fact that, while the Basuto gave us to believe they were actively employed in collecting the amount of the penalty, they appear to have been engaged in concentrating their whole force in the neighbourhood.

“3. That Your Excellency’s demands having neither been complied with nor enforced, as stated in your written message to Moshesh of which I was a few days since the bearer, I can see no guarantee in the threats there held out for the future good conduct of the Basuto, who I cannot consider either humbled or overcome, they having followed and kept up a heavy fire upon the troops to their encampments last night and retaken part of the cattle.

“Under these circumstances, however much peace may be desirable, I have most respectfully but earnestly to beg that Your Excellency would be pleased to reconsider this matter ere coming to final terms with the Chief Moshesh.

“(Signed) C. MOSTYN OWEN.”

No reply to this is on record unless it is to be found in a General Order issued next day in the following form :—

*Extract from General Order*

“HEAD-QUARTERS, CAMP, PLATBERG,  
“22 Dec. 1852.

“The Commander of the Forces conveys his thanks to the army engaged against the Basutos at the Berea on the 20th inst. for their gallant conduct, and his

admiration of their steadiness and discipline, by which an overwhelming host of Basutos and Bataungs were defeated, during a contest which lasted from early in the morning until 8 p.m., when the enemy, with a force of not less than six thousand well-armed horsemen, under considerable organization, after repeatedly assailing the troops at every point, was driven from the field with such severe loss as to compel him to sue for peace."

Two days afterwards the camp was broken up and the army retraced its steps to the Cape Colony. Sir George Cathcart had failed entirely to execute the programme he forecast, having neither adjusted the matters he contemplated nor chastised Moshesh, nor settled a single one of the vexatious boundary questions which cried aloud for it. He left the Sovereignty terribly involved, putting the final seal upon it by the issue of a Proclamation which, if it meant anything, meant an invitation to the white settlers to organize themselves and combine to accomplish by Burgher force what he had failed to do with a well-equipped little army and the Queen's name behind it.

## CHAPTER XII

They have taken things by bits and scraps, some at one time and one pretence, and some at another, just as they pressed, without any sort of regard to their relations or dependencies. They never had any kind of system, right or wrong; but only invented occasionally some miserable tale for the day, in order meanly to sneak out of difficulties, into which they had proudly strutted.

BURKE.

**The Sovereignty is abandoned: Sir George Clerk sent from England to compromise with Boers and Basuto: the Free State is given absolute independence but no boundaries are settled: Moshesh crushes the Batlokoa in a decisive battle**

1852—1854

SIR GEORGE CATHCART found it no easy or pleasant matter to shake the Sovereignty dust off his feet. Moshesh, according to all etiquette, should have responded to the Governor's invitation to visit him and pay his proper respects. In failing to do so his attitude was not only unbecoming and contemptuous but capable of the construction generally placed upon it, viz. that his professions of loyalty to the Crown were no less insincere than his bearing was defiant. There is no escape from that view of his conduct. The fact of his publishing far and wide amongst the tribes that he had conquered and driven the British from his

country, after acknowledging in writing his defeat, has been considered sound proof of his duplicity. But, the old Councillors have asserted that many such acts were done by his sons without his knowledge or approval. In judging of his actions at that time this view must be considered as probably the correct one.

Even the complaisant Moroko, so esteemed by Sir Harry Smith for his docile manners, turned on General Cathcart bitterly, saying he had not seen the justice of the Governor nor his property returned nor any restitution of the rights which were promised him. He flung back his annuity of £50 with the taunt that the British Government had oppressed instead of protected him. It was partly true. He had loyally obeyed the orders of the Queen's representative, had committed himself against the Basuto and was now worse off than ever.

The burghers too lay in wait for the Governor as he passed Smithfield with a loyal and respectful address setting out their grievances and losses and reminding him of the pledges they had at times received of protection against the Kaffirs. Sir George Cathcart repudiated the pledges of his predecessor as to the responsibility of Government for their protection or for restitution of cattle taken by Moshesh or any one else. He gave them a portion of the cattle obtained from Moshesh and bade them distinctly to understand that he did so as a boon and not as a right. He admonished them for supposing he had ever intended to carry on a protracted war for their benefit with British money, or to destroy the Basuto so that their rich lands might fall into other hands. And he en-



deavoured to pacify them by announcing that a *modus vivendi* was provided in his Settlement Proclamation which gave license for the formation of a commando system for the security of life and recovery of property ; he added, " and I further declare to you, that if in the pursuit of your stolen property you kill the thief, I will bear you harmless, provided of course that you do not abuse that license, and go beyond the necessity of the case."

Indiscretion is hardly the word to apply for undertaking, as High Commissioner, to absolve from impeachment every man who killed a thief. It was, if not an encouragement to shoot offenders at sight, a grave interference with the laws of the land, ill-administered as they were. Fortunately, the burghers did not take him seriously or rejoice with him when he said, " I leave you in a better state, if it be not disturbed by your own indiscretion, than I found you." Instead of embracing the British representatives they coquetted with the Basuto and came to a useful understanding with them.

The High Commissioner on return to Cape Colony lost no time in reporting his proceedings and optimistic views to the Secretary of State. He urged that the chastisement he had inflicted upon Moshesh, who had been reduced to entire submission after being forced to pay the penalty, had restored complete peace and order ; that he had, at an important crisis when a false step might involve a big Basuto war and embarrass the Government by irretrievably compromising the future policy in respect of the retention or abandonment of the Sovereignty, come to satisfactory terms with

Moshesh whom he described as the most enlightened and upright Chief in South Africa, worthy of perfect confidence and respect ; that all claims against the British Government had been compensated, all wrongs redressed and a good understanding restored throughout the Orange River Territory. No doubt Sir George Cathcart sincerely believed, from the imperfect information at his disposal in a flying trip, that such was the case.

It was therefore not unnatural that the Secretary of State, then the Duke of Newcastle, was able to persuade himself, while deprecating the necessity of hostilities with frontier natives, to sanction and confirm all that had been done in the name of H.M. Government. He recognized, in a despatch of March 14, 1853, the justice of not prosecuting further hostilities after the submission of the Basuto Chief, presuming of course that the durable impression which the expedition was calculated to produce on the minds of the natives would not be weakened by the immediate return of the troops.

As all apparently was peace on a lasting basis, in the opinion of Downing Street, though the settlers were apprehensive of danger on their homesteads and the tribes were harrying each other with small forays, the moment seemed propitious for the change adumbrated in Lord Grey's despatches to Sir Harry Smith by which the British Government should divest itself of the burden, anxiety and expense of the Orange River Colony. Accordingly, the Duke of Newcastle wrote a despatch, in continuation of the previous one, wherein the following passages occur :—

“ Her Majesty’s Government have decided to withdraw from the Orange River Sovereignty. I shall not now enter into the reasons which have weighed with us in coming to this decision ; it is sufficient to state that the rude Government which has hitherto existed in the Sovereignty has failed to accomplish the object for which it was established. The authority of the British Resident has not been upheld and respected by the coloured inhabitants, nor by the Colonists of European origin. You are of opinion that a force of 2,000 men and a complete organization of the Government are indispensable to the maintenance of British authority amongst them. The project is inadmissible. It would yield no advantages which would compensate for the risk and expense attending it. The policy, therefore, of relinquishing the Sovereignty over the territory in question may be considered as settled. Moreover, the present conjuncture is a favourable one for the execution of this measure. It will not now entail any compromise of honour and dignity. The late expedition and the engagement at Berea will remove any misconception which the relinquishment of territory might be apt to give rise to.

“ Questions of great nicety will require adjustment in carrying the measure into effect. I have thought fit to accede to your strong recommendation that a duty of such delicacy and difficulty should be entrusted to a public officer selected with special reference to its nature, and in full possession of the views of the Government. I hope that the officer to whom I shall delegate this important trust will be able to proceed to the Cape by the mail of next month ; and in the

interval which must elapse before his arrival, you will make such preparatory arrangements as you may judge conducive to the proper understanding of the policy to which he will be commissioned to give effect."

In pursuance of this policy a Commission was issued in April 1853 by the Queen, revoking the powers conferred upon the High Commissioner over the Orange River and native territories and appointing Sir George Russell Clerk, K.C.B., to be a Special Commissioner for the purpose of settling the internal affairs of all the territories concerned, for determining the disputes existing among the natives and other inhabitants thereof, and taking measures for enabling the said inhabitants to establish peaceable and orderly Government therein. In other words the Special Commissioner was burdened with the great task of attempting without visible power to settle all those intricate questions and to allay all those troubles which had baffled so many others in authority ; he was to attempt all this with the knowledge that his decisions would, as soon as he was gone, be set at nought in the absence of authority to enforce them ; and then to prompt the jarring elements to build up independent Government of their own upon the ruins left of British rule.

This was the first public step towards abandonment. On being promulgated it at once weakened the hands of the newly appointed Resident, Mr. Green, who was endeavouring hard to cope with the lawlessness everywhere prevailing. He had under him only one or two magistrates and, as willing though unofficial helpers, the missionaries of every persuasion who realized with

dismay the chaotic drift of affairs. But, little attention was paid to his advice and remonstrances.

Meanwhile, Moshesh made vigorous efforts to unite under himself all the tribes in a common bond to resist Boer aggression which he anticipated and secretly feared as the settlers, increasing in numbers, consolidated their strength under the new Commando Law enacted by Sir George Cathcart. To the course pursued by the Chief the Governor saw no objection ; he had rather welcomed it on the ground that a balance of power should be established so as to obviate the necessity of interference for the protection of the coloured races. Some of the tribes readily joined issue with the Basuto. But it was not so with Sikonyela and Taaibosch who were tempted to follow marauding tactics in the hope that, if worsted, they might be able, in the future as in the past, to fly to British officers with words of loyalty on their lips and successfully gain assistance.

With these ideas in their minds, embittered also that the battle of Berea instead of humbling Moshesh had left him more dominant than ever, these two chiefs combined and, together with a lot of vagabonds, white and black, always to be found hovering like vultures in vicinities where plunder is to be gained, attacked, first a clan of Bataung under one Tulu whom they robbed of all he possessed and, having killed eight men, drove the remainder into the Lesuto ; secondly, the clan of Witsi living on the northern border next to Natal. Witsi was not a normal vassal of Moshesh but great kinship existed between them. He was a bold man and drove off the marauders, who

had actually violated the Basuto country in their raid, killing twenty of them and retaking the stock driven off by the robbers.

This pillaging went on until Moshesh was exasperated and burned to revenge himself on Sikonyela who had so long defied him ; it was commonly said that he longed also to strike a blow in scorn at one who had been allied to the British, but most likely his sons were responsible for that impression. He appealed in a most correct letter to the British Resident for intervention. In answer he was advised to remain quiet but told in plain language that the policy of Her Majesty's Government was never again to interfere in native quarrels. He therefore made up his mind that mediation of any sort would be of no avail, and gathered himself in November 1853 for a final effort to crush the Batlokoa and their vagabond confederates.

Hastily collecting an effective force divided into three battalions he gave one each to his sons Letsie and Masupha and commanded the third in person. In conformity with savage instincts and the manners of the time, he gave no warning of his intentions but fell suddenly upon the enemy who were both unprepared and unsuspecting in the belief that the Basuto were engaged in negotiation with the Resident, who was known to be anxious to avert these turmoils whilst the words "all quiet" were forming the text of every despatch.

Sikonyela's stronghold was noted throughout a country of strongholds for its impregnability. It was a small mountain reached only by rugged approaches,



Photo by T. Lindsay Fairclough.

YOALA HOHOLO, STRONGYELA'S STRONGHOLD,





with a plateau on the top on which lay hidden, amidst rocky coverts, villages, cattle and the robber spoils of years. The safety of the defenders was assured by the belief that assault could only be delivered effectively by ascending a winding staircase of stone. No other means of entrance had been hitherto attempted so that the holders were free to concentrate their forces there. Up this path the young chief Masupha, renowned always for his fine fighting qualities, led a body of devoted retainers who, directly the alarm was given, were viciously assailed from all sides but succeeded in fighting their way upwards after some considerable loss.

Simultaneously the other two columns under Moshesh and Letsie, whilst the defence was mainly directed towards Masupha, contrived by climbing from shoulder to shoulder to scale the precipitous rocks on the far side and gained the crest just in time to co-operate with Masupha who was bearing the whole brunt. Then was fought a ferocious hand-to-hand battle in which many of the allies fell and victory rested with the Basuto who made short work of prisoners and wounded, burned the kralls and swept off all property found there belonging to the Batlokoa and Korannas. Sikonyela escaped by hiding for several days in a cave the mouth of which was cunningly draped so that the visitors could not detect it. However, Moshesh was not displeased, for it was not the death of Sikonyela he was seeking but his submission. His eldest son together with Gert Taaibosch and the cream of his warriors perished in the conflict. The followers of his brother Mota, who was absent at the time, were

wise enough to throw themselves upon the mercy of Moshesh who readily allowed them to occupy as his vassals the strip of country shown as allocated to the Batlokoa on Map II., which Sir Harry Smith had, according to the Chief, torn from his grasp. Thus he had come into his own again by the aid of the assegai.

Moshesh apologized to the British Resident for the painful necessity which compelled him to go and "arrange" matters with the Batlokoa, who never recovered from the blow and ceased thenceforth to have any existence as a tribal entity. Sikonyela so soon as the Basuto were well away with their booty emerged from his lair to find himself almost the solitary occupant of the celebrated fortress now in smoking ruins with the dead lying all round. It is possible to imagine the feelings that came over him as he surveyed the scene and realized that the stronghold which had sheltered him so often could never again be his home : the sacred tradition of impregnability was gone for ever and so were his cattle.

Collecting a small band of his homeless, scattered people he made his way to Winburg where he met and appealed to Sir George Clerk for assistance, alleging that his sufferings were due to the vengeance he had drawn down on account of his loyalty and alliance with the British. The Special Commissioner refused to entertain any idea of calling for troops, but treated him kindly and offered him a location in the Cape Colony which he accepted and subsequently retired to after proudly declining a liberal offer of land from Moshesh on the sole condition of fealty. He was unquestionably a great warrior ; but his inordinate appetite for war

and plunder afforded his unfortunate tribe no rest. He died in 1856 at Herschel, leaving a grandson Ledingwana who, gathering together some remnants of the clan, eventually became incorporated with the Basuto and is now living with them as their chief in the wildest parts of the inner mountains.

Some extracts from the story of the attack on the stronghold narrated personally through a Dutch interpreter by Sikonyela after his escape to Winburg are not without interest. In introducing the Chief, the writer first describes him as a slender man, about five feet four inches in height, with expressive eyes, narrow forehead—the cranium indicating great courage ; and the combative organ being nearly as large as half a pigeon's egg.

“The sun rose and the cattle were driven out. I was still in my house and wished to go to the house of assembly. The people at the watches screamed. I went out to see and asked what was the matter as I saw nobody. On examining, I saw men with a troop of horses ride to the cattle. I seized my gun and got a horse caught. The horsemen were about three miles off. I got three men with me and we saddled our horses. The horse I had refused to proceed. I returned to a mountain named Klaprug, whilst the three men endeavoured to collect the cattle. One of my men fired a shot at the Basutos, consisting of perhaps 800 men. There was another troop of horsemen behind a hill. We all fled now to David's Berg. Gert Taaibosch with 14 Korannas joined my people when we consisted of less than 100 men, and all took refuge in David's mountain.

“ We found now that we had the Basutos in front and rear—some having come on to the mountain to which we fled. We took shelter in a krantz ; but some of my people were still separated from the main body, and we had Basutos between us. The Basutos kept up a steady fire but they fired high. Four men went to the poort to see what was going on and found another division coming. They defended the approach for a time and then came to the krantz where I was. The Basutos and my people now got mixed and in the confusion it was difficult to distinguish them. One of my people shot two Basutos and took their horses. Gert Taaibosch’s and my people sheltered by the krantz fired away till their powder was finished. Letsie (Moshesh’s son) was there with some Bastards of Carolus Baatje : they went towards my mountain to seize the wagons.

“ A party of my men went to lie in ambush at a difficult point of approach to my mountain where a path has been cut out of the rock. To their surprise they found a force of Basutos above them and they fled to where I was. David (my son) and his people were on my mountain but they were nearly overcome at this time. The Basutos now got possession of the difficult points of access and threw stones on my people underneath : and five women, one child and two men were killed at these points. My son David with about 20 men got hemmed into a corner. Their powder failed ; the Basutos stormed and killed every man but two, David and Moshepi. David had a gun and rushed to one division of the storming party, when it gave way. Moshepi had only an assegai ; he dashed

at another party which also gave way. In this way David and Moshepi got separated and neither could help the other. David was now killed but Moshepi, my nephew, escaped and hid among the walls but the Basutos fired much at the point by which he received a musket shot on the shoulder. These affairs occupied the whole day till sundown. David was killed about noon. The cattle were in possession of the Basutos—about 4,000 head. I had only about 50 of my own people to defend me with 14 Korannas and 6 Bastards. I have about 800 fighting men and Taaibosch had about 100 but the people were scattered. The great body of my people were absent and being unprepared were not armed. On finding that the mountain was attacked they hid themselves. The spies had slept. I do not know how many of my people were killed. I hid in the mountain ten days. Moshesh was there. My brother was brought before Moshesh and killed. This is contrary to our custom. I hear that two of my wives and two of my son David's wives have been taken by the Basutos. I want them back, likewise my cattle.

“I have always been faithful to Government. Moshesh was once under me. Moshesh will now have that I shall pay him tribute as he has paid to me but I will not submit. On this account he wants to have my head. I have therefore come out of the way to hear what Government which I have always obeyed thinks of these things ; and whether I am to get any help, considering that I have ever been ready to help Government. I do not know where Gert Taaibosch is. In the night we were together, when we saw a man in

front of us, who shouted, 'Who are you?' This startled and separated us. I have never seen him since."

We must now revert to the Special Commissioner, Sir George Clerk. He had arrived in Bloemfontein in August 1853. Quickly comprehending the unhappy condition of affairs, his first act was to write a friendly note to Moshesh; then, to send Mr. Owen to inform the Chief of his earnest desire to settle the boundary between the Basuto and the Boers and to announce the intention of Her Majesty's Government to abandon the Sovereignty. His instructions made it clear that the British flag should be withdrawn as speedily as practicable. He felt it was a case of scuttle to be carried out with as much grace as possible. Nothing was owing to the Basuto who had facilitated matters by subjugating the Batlokoa and Korannas and thereby enhanced their power. But the Emigrant Farmers still claimed over £30,000 for losses from native deprivations. They did not fear abandonment so long as they were left with a free hand to do as they liked with natives and their land; first of all however they wanted to extract compensation from the British taxpayer for interference in their affairs, although times out of number they had been warned in the baldest language that the Imperial Government declined the liability.

Nevertheless, Sir George Clerk urged the payment of £20,000 as a measure which the peculiar circumstances of the case forced upon the liberality of the British authorities, pleading that no peace could be



BATLOKOA GIRLS DANCING.





expected so long as the claim remained unadjusted. In recommending this he felt bound to admit that it would only remove one of the causes of old enmity, for the Boers were certain after abandonment to watch for a favourable opportunity of invading the Basuto whilst Moshesh would also feel it best, if he was to be involved in a quarrel, to measure strength with them during the early period of their distraction in consolidating a new form of government.

Sir George Cathcart, as High Commissioner, condemned the claim as invalid, confessing that he had never believed in the enormous losses asserted by the Boers, the theft of which by the Basuto was as unlikely as impossible. Nor did he admit the damages alleged against Moshesh who was undeservedly blamed for offences that should not have been laid to his charge. It was a tardy confession, the knowledge of which might with advantage have affected his judgment at an earlier date when demanding the fine which led to war. However, he reluctantly approved payment of the sum from the public purse. It was thereupon remitted and distributed.

The effect of paying out what was then a large sum of money, and the general state of uncertainty as to what would ensue after British retirement, combined to quiet and make all parties cautious and suspicious of each other ; the lull enabled the Government to seize the auspicious moment, when all hostilities were suspended, to creep out of the Sovereignty. Sir George Clerk foresaw an interval of tranquillity when natives and Boers, no longer sure of British interference and money, would hesitate to provoke each

other with only themselves to lean upon. He found neither Moshesh nor any other party were outwardly averse to the radical change he was ordered to make ; consequently, the motive, viz. benevolence towards the native races which had drawn us in, ceased apparently to exist. He considered the day had arrived to publish the edict of abandonment and did so in the form of an Order in Council and Proclamation. Both had been maturing for some considerable time.

The Queen's Order in Council dated January 30, 1854, recited in due procession the steps H.M. Government had thought fit to take in proclaiming the Sovereignty in 1848, in providing a system of Administration, in constituting the whole territory north of the Orange River into a separate settlement with all the formulæ of Government over whites, Basutos and other natives in 1851, and then ended with the solemn deed of Abandonment :—

#### “ORANGE RIVER TERRITORY

#### “PROCLAMATION

“ WHEREAS we have thought fit by and with the advice of our Privy Council . . . to abandon and renounce for ourselves, our heirs and successors, all dominion and sovereignty of the Crown . . . over the territories designated in our letters patent of the 22nd March 1851, by the name of the Orange River Territory, and have revoked and determined the said letters patent accordingly : We do for that end publish

this our Royal Proclamation, and do hereby declare and make known the abandonment and renunciation of our dominion and sovereignty over the said territory and the inhabitants thereof. . . .

“(Signed) C. C. GREVILLE.”

The consummation of this act marked an important epoch in the history of Basutoland. Much had transpired in the few preceding years. The Basuto and other native tribes, animated partly by fear, partly by the desire to improve under missionary and other good influences, cultivated the good feeling of British officers whose advice and protection was sought and welcomed. Both were accorded, the reasons generally assigned for extending British dominion being to prevent the extinction of native rights. “After awhile the measure becomes costly, inquiry follows, and it then is evident that the conquest has been the mere occupation of wastes almost uninhabitable, attended with constant inconvenience and expense to the State, arising from nothing else than the extinction of the rights of those natives, to protect whom was the motive or the pretext of the extension of authority.”

These words of Sir George Clerk (singularly incorrect in describing as uninhabitable wastes what has proved to be the finest farming land in South Africa) supply the best commentary on the errors of the time, due not to insincerity but to the mixture of inexperience and zeal. Her Majesty's Government chivalrously befriended the natives and then entered upon wars against them on behalf of people persistently disowned ; finally it shook off its responsibilities with heroic virtue

as soon as the consequences were felt and the bill came in.

Sir George Clerk next proceeded to act upon the further clauses in his instructions. He summoned to meet him late in February 1854 as many as he could get of the Europeans in the Sovereignty for the purpose of forming the new autonomy. By them delegates were appointed to form a Provisional Government and to them were ceded and handed over by means of a Convention whatever powers the British Representative still claimed to hold.

From that memorable document it is only necessary to reproduce the first two articles which bore upon the affairs of Basutoland :—

“ *Article I.*—Her Majesty’s Special Commissioner, in entering into a Convention for finally transferring the government of the Orange River Territory to the representatives delegated by the inhabitants to receive it, guarantees, on the part of Her Majesty’s Government, the future independence of that country and its government ; and that, after the necessary preliminary arrangements for making over the same . . . shall have been completed the inhabitants of the country shall then be free. And that this independence shall, without unnecessary delay, be confirmed and ratified by an instrument . . . finally freeing them from their allegiance to the British Crown, and declaring them, to all intents and purposes, a free and independent people, and their Government to be treated and considered henceforth a free and independent Government.

“ *Article II.*—The British Government has no alliance

whatever with any Native Chiefs or tribes to the northward of the Orange River (with the exception of the Griqua Chief Adam Kok); and Her Majesty's Government has no wish or intention to enter hereafter into any treaties which may be injurious or prejudicial to the interests of the Orange River Government."

Noteworthy points in this Convention were: It recognized the pure and unadulterated independence of the new Republic without defining its sphere of influence, or expressly excluding Basutoland and other native territory hitherto included in the Sovereignty; it disclaimed all alliances or treaties with native tribes. These declarations were so explicit that it is almost incredible to believe they could ever be repudiated. Later events will show how they were interpreted.

Sir George Cathcart wrote a valedictory despatch full of high encomiums to Moshesh to whom it was personally handed by Sir George Clerk at Bloemfontein where the Chief, in friendly company with Moroko, went to bid the Special Commissioner farewell. Then, on March 11, 1854, in the presence of English, Dutch and natives, the British flag which had towered over the citadel at Bloemfontein for the past six years was lowered, amidst mixed feelings of regret and relief. The curtain momentarily dropped to rise on a new scene in which the members of the new Estate and Moshesh consoled themselves with feasting, and fine speeches upon the subject of their future relations and the good intentions that were to animate them all.

A short era of peace was indeed to ensue, marred

at times by disturbing border incidents quite capable of producing racial war which however the wise men of each side were anxious to avoid. It was ushered in by a public Conference between the first President of the Republic, Josias Philip Hoffman, an able man but a cripple, and Moshesh, whose statesmanlike sentiments made a great impression at the time. The following are brief extracts from his speech, addressed to the Conference in the Sesuto language :—

“ As soon as it was announced that the Government had devolved upon yourselves . . . I determined to start with the twofold object of seeing you and Sir George Clerk. . . . Immediately on arrival I saw Mr. Hoffman and told him I was gratified to meet him. . . . This gentleman by his many years' experience is intimately acquainted with our laws and customs. . . . From the experience of the past, hints may be derived regarding what has been beneficial, and what on the contrary has caused trouble and disputes, whereby we may cultivate the former and avoid the latter. . . . I have noticed that Mr. Hoffman has feeble limbs and must use crutches. . . . This sufficiently proves to us that it is not strong and sound limbs that deliver a man from difficulty and danger, but that it is God who does so. It is doubtless this very fearlessness, truth and uprightness in Mr. Hoffman that has occasioned my finding him at the head of his countrymen, for he has won the confidence . . . of his fellow burghers. . . . I hope that the land will be properly governed and peace maintained, if the rulers regulate their proceedings on principles of uprightness



MOSHESH IN 1854.





and truth, aiming at agreement among themselves, and peace with their neighbours. And although I have no right to teach you, I earnestly desire that drunkenness may not prevail either among blacks or whites. . . .”

They were the simple words of a black Chief, yet were such as might with dignity have been spoken by the head of the highest civilized State. President Hoffman replied suitably and all parted with hopeful anticipations.

Recent events had brought about such a revolution of affairs that the slate was practically wiped clean for the establishment of a new political order of things. Before proceeding, it is desirable to consider some points relative to the position of Basutoland and the Basuto at this juncture.

Prominent amongst outstanding features were, that their independence was not challenged and that no boundary whatever was defined between them and the Orange Free State. Should any possible doubt remain as to whether any boundary lines still existed or whether all had been swept away, it was at once removed by an authoritative statement of Sir George Clerk to the effect that a war between two powers breaks all pre-existing treaties. The Basuto and the Free Staters were left therefore in the perilous condition of having an open frontier, upon each side of which both claimed extensive land rights—a condition bound by the pressure of occupation to terminate in collision. It was true that the Special Commissioner had, as an expedient, suggested that, in the event of disputes, impartial arbitrators should be mutually appointed by the parties.

But the suggestion had no merit, for there were no impartial arbiters nor Court of Appeal in case of disagreement. He went so far as to propose the appointment of a British Agent to reside in Basutoland as a precaution against outbreaks and alarms, and as a means of establishing peace on a stable foundation as well as to facilitate settlement of border disputes ; but it found no favour in England.

The Basuto therefore, having been fettered with limits were now free ; having been brought under civilized laws were now released from them ; having lost their vassals had now regained most of them. Yet there was much uncertainty and unsettlement. Moshesh, in being left with the Boers, found them unrelenting neighbours who honestly confessed that they made no pretence of protecting or preserving the natives, as the British Government with all its fine traditions sincerely meant to do, if it could have been done cheaply. It would have been better perhaps to have let the natives work out their own destiny in the first place than to proclaim guardianship in high-sounding terms and then desert them when matters had been well muddled up. Fortunately they were at the moment comparatively strong in numbers, conscious after the Cathcart war of the defensible character of their country, and confident of the ability to resist their enemies. The parting words also of the British Government, absolving them from all allegiance and restraint and promising non-interference in future, made it clear that they would have to rely solely upon their own intelligence and capacity.

That capacity had undergone considerable fluctua-

tions. Sir Harry Smith and his agents had reduced it to almost minor dimensions by the policy of detaching their vassals—even ranging them in opposition. But now, the Batlokoa, most powerful of them, with the deposition of Sikonyela had been struck off the roll of enemies and drifted into clanship with them, under Mota ; the Bataung under Molitsane were indissolubly associated by every kind of tie ; the Baphuti under Moirosi were acknowledged to be within Basuto sphere of influence ; Moroko and his Baralong, if not incorporated, were friendly adherents ; the Korannas and Bastards were no longer factors. The whole lot in fact realized that Moshesh was a safe man to follow, if not as a seigneur at least as an ally and friend.

It cannot therefore be a matter of surprise if the younger generation of Basuto felt inwardly conscious of their accelerated strength and somewhat puffed up with a sense of their own importance. Flushed with the recollection that the stronghold at Thaba Bosigo had been threatened with ludicrous results, that an imposing British army had recoiled under a heavy blow after being deluded and entrapped, that the leading British and Dutch authorities had poured adulation upon their Chief, their minds were ill prepared for the conduct of negotiations requiring compromise and tact, for the display of which their mental calibre as a tribe was not yet proportioned. Moshesh was already shrewd enough to see dangers ahead ; but his sons were hard to curb. Bewildering changes and success were sufficient to throw them off the balance.

Major Warden, the former Resident, in a pathetic appeal to the Secretary of State against the harsh

treatment he had received, after long years of faithful service, by dismissal without investigation, associated the political failures of which he was made the victim to causes beyond his control. He attributed the original disturbance of peace and contentment to the impetuous freaks of Sir Harry Smith by which his influence was made impotent and continuity was broken. He ascribed the loss of British prestige and the general disorder to the fact that the native tribes became restless and dissatisfied on finding the popular doings of one Governor altogether upset by another, and a sort of half British rule over them capable neither of being understood nor appreciated. These words not inaptly pictured the situation. He, poor man, though dutiful to the orders of his superiors whose whimsical policy he endeavoured loyally to carry out, was one of the many pawns sacrificed by loss of reputation and reduction to penury. He erred, it was said, on the side of soldierly obedience to instructions. However that may be it was clear that towards the end of his career he acted in a despotic way towards the Basuto, carried away perhaps by the prejudice borrowed from Cape Town despatches, and by his association with the land speculators who swarmed round him.

A sentence from Bacon "On Empire" seems exactly fitted for the period covered by the last two chapters :—

"Certain it is that nothing destroyeth authority so much as the unequal and untimely interchange, of power pressed too far and relaxed too much."

## CHAPTER XIII

Even war is better than a wretched peace.—TACITUS.

General Cathcart is replaced by Sir George Grey as High Commissioner: border disputes about land and thieving lead to exciting correspondence, complications and rupture: another ultimatum

1854—1858

PRESIDENT HOFFMAN, who had for several years resided peacefully, through change and tumult, on a farm given to him by Moshesh on the banks of the Caledon River near the present town of Wepener, was on most intimate terms with the Chief, to whom he sent as first Ambassador to the Court at Thaba Bosigo Mr. Joseph Millerd Orpen, an English colonist of high character and education who took a prominent part in framing the new Republican Constitution. To that high-minded official belonged the credit for helping to preserve such tranquillity as existed for the next year or two.

It is not to say that any kind of order prevailed, because collisions between the farmers and the natives were of frequent occurrence. Years of turmoil in the country had left a deposit of bad characters, black and

white, whose purpose it ever was to foment along the frontier disturbances from which they might profit in land or booty. These people stimulated the bad propensities of professional law-breakers like Poshudi (brother of Moshesh), Jan Letelle and Lebenya, grandsons of Motlumi (his uncle), and Witsi whose tenure of land on the fringe of white settlement was precarious. Their audacious robberies were so frequent that the crippled President Hoffman felt compelled to make a pilgrimage to Thaba Bosigo in August 1854. There he succeeded in bringing to trial and summary punishment some notorious thieves. Before leaving he warned the Basuto that the aggressiveness and thieving of the border chieftains above mentioned, claiming to be under Basuto protection, would if continued infuriate his burghers and eventuate in war.

It was plain to him, as it was to Moshesh, that no matter how zealous responsible men were to avoid friction the peace of the land was in jeopardy so long as firebrands who could successfully set all courts at defiance were free to work mischief. There were in the Free State no proper prisons and it was hard to bring offenders to justice; of police and judicial officers there was barely yet the semblance. The position of Landdrosts or Magistrates was so precarious that they feared to punish any who had influence behind them. It is related by Mr. Orpen that the Landdrost of Winburg once gave judgment against a Boer farmer who was so enraged that he felled him to the ground by a blow from the butt end of his horse-pistol and then tried to throttle him. There were no commonly acknowledged boundaries, the natives assum-

ing all lines had been abolished, the Boers believing those of Sir Harry Smith still held good.

The path of the President was beset with obstacles which he tried to overcome by the use of kindly persuasion rather than harshness. In a weak moment when exchanging courtesies with the Basuto in the hope of gaining concessions for the Free State, he promised on his return to Bloemfontein to make them a present of gunpowder. On that becoming publicly known it caused a storm of anger to arise amongst the members of the Volksraad who compelled him to resign for that and other reasons alleged by them to be inimical to the dignity and interests of the State. He was temporarily replaced by Mr. J. J. Venter early in 1855 and eventually succeeded as President by Mr. J. N. Boshoff in August of that year. Both of those gentlemen held meetings with the Basuto for the purpose of trying to improve border relations every day getting more strained.

The year 1855 brought another important change for South Africa in the arrival at the Cape of Sir George Grey as Governor and High Commissioner in succession to General Cathcart. He wrote the usual complimentary letters to Moshesh and received a painful lamentation from the deposed President Hoffman who predicted a ruinous war with the Basuto if the restless white people who had compassed his downfall were not restrained.

Sir George Grey, a man of humane tendencies deeply interested in the native races, to whom he immediately made grants of money for building churches and schools, was not long in coming to the conclusion that the

state of relations between the white and black inhabitants of the old Sovereignty was dangerous. To the Secretary of State he wrote candidly advising no interference with the internal affairs of neighbouring states ; but he was not easy in his mind nor satisfied that it was right or safe to watch the drift into war without an effort to bring the President with his colleagues face to face with Moshesh and his sons, in order to heal if possible their major differences.

Accordingly, he arranged for a Conference to take place at Smithfield on October 5, 1855, in his presence. A long debate ensued taking the form of recrimination about cattle stealing and brigandage, which the Basuto Chief deprecated and asked for evidence of and the President condemned as positively certain to result in conflict. In the end, Moshesh asked leave to return home as he had not gone prepared to transact important business away from his people.

The Governor tried to pour oil on the troubled waters. Addressing Moshesh he said :—

“A man who raises barbarians in the scale of civilization is admired by ages. You are now the builder. You have collected some barbarians and made a kind of nation. The question now is whether you are to succeed or fail. Not only is South Africa looking on but many parts of the world too. Every good man is willing to assist,—no one more so than the President. It is impossible that a civilized nation can allow a nation of thieves to remain on their boundary. The President and I are ready to put them down. I would be glad to see you more cordial





From the painting by Richmond.

SIR GEORGE GREY, K.C.B.

p. 188]



to accept the President's offers than you have seemed to be, and as I am now going away I would be glad to be certain that you would devise some plan for the future. In such a plan I will assist. It must be greatly owing to your own energy that you have raised yourself to the position you now hold, and I would advise you to trust to that energy and not to bad advisers. I hope before I leave that you will promise to put an end to such practices as those that have been carried on."

Moshesh in the course of a final reply said :—

"I cannot bind myself to say there will be no more stealing ; thieves do not tell me when they come in or out of Basutoland. You must give me time. I have eaten the Governor's meat, and it will be easy for me to vomit it up, but it is not so easy to make thieves disgorge what they have stolen."

But the Governor was not happy at the result of the official meeting so next morning he called for Moshesh with his sons and councillors to meet him in private conference. He warmly advised the Chief to satisfy the Free State demands but found it difficult to explain the obscure threat unguardedly used that he was ready to join the President in suppressing thieves. The Chief was evidently not inclined to enter into formal agreements away from his tribe ; yet he was extremely anxious to be on good terms with the English, whose patronage was essential to him, and he knew there was no existing force to compel the observance of an agreement which could always be

evaded by the excuse that it had not been ratified by a referendum to the people of either of the contracting parties. Posing therefore as one who had yielded for the sake of peace to wise counsels, he signed with the President a *modus vivendi*, the main provisions being that :—

1. Natives wishing to enter the Free State should be required to hold a Pass signed by a chief or missionary ; with penalties for contravention ;
2. Parties of natives desiring to hunt in the Free State should first obtain a Landdrost's Permit ;
3. Chiefs should be bound to take up the spoor of stolen cattle traced to Basutoland and arrest the thieves ;
4. Thieves should either be surrendered to the Free State with the stolen property, or, failing that, there should be payable a fine equal to four times the value of the property which, together with the fine, should be restored within two months ;
5. Native trespassers on farms in the Free State should be expelled by force ;
6. Disputes as to the right of property in land to be determined by the President and Moshesh in consultation ;
7. No burgher to occupy land in Basutoland without consent of the Chief.

This Agreement, which left the question of boundaries and farms as remote as ever, was really a useful form of Inter-State Regulations, the most practicable yet proposed. It introduced and regulated for the first time a system of Passes such as the

farmers and chiefs had informally adopted for a long time amongst themselves as a check upon vagrancy and stock-thieving, so it cannot be urged that the idea was sprung upon the natives without their knowledge or approval. In other respects the understanding had a quieting effect.

The High Commissioner, after receiving the thanks of all parties for his friendly intervention, wrote to the Secretary of State, then Mr. Labouchere, that, being depressed at the outlook of the public conference when it seemed that the dignity of neither side would yield, he had approached Moshesh in private with such success that arrangements were effected calculated to remove the prospect of collision between them. It was a hopeful forecast which his mediation had done much to justify. He also wrote again to Moshesh congratulating him upon the improved state of affairs and urging him to watchfulness :

“CAPE TOWN, 8 Dec. 1855.

“CHIEF MOSHESH, MY FRIEND,

“I have had a letter from the President of the Free State dated the 23rd Nov. in which he tells me that stealing has now ceased, and that your people cause no further annoyance of any kind whatever. . . . Be watchful still, let not weariness beguile into too sound a sleep him who watches for the good of others, not for himself alone. I thank you much for your efforts to put down stealing. . . . Has your cart reached you? Is it a good one? If you sleep not, neither let your missionaries sleep. I have heard no more from them about the School ; nudge them gently

that they may wake up and write to me, for this is a noble work. Let your sons and captains know that I send my love to them. . . .

“(Signed) G. GREY.”

His kindly interest in the Basuto went further than advice—by proposals to establish at government expense an Industrial School for the training of their boys in arts and crafts under the French missionaries. The idea did not mature in his time but took root and developed in later years under other auspices.

With the dawn of the year 1856 came many sombre clouds. Jan Letelle amongst others was a perfect cancer in the disputed territory. The following is a type of one of his illiterate but offensive missives which kept the farmers in a state of suspense :—

To FIELD-CORNET OLIVIER

“What I am your people (*sic*).

“Jan Letelle write to you that you wish to fight with him, but you are to come this month, and if you do not come, then I, Jan will burn down your house and . . . because you want to fight.

“Your friend

“(Signed) JAN LETELLE.”

Witsi in the north under no control plundered far and wide causing the farmers of Harrismith to desert their homesteads and go into laager ; he even violated the Natal border and caused such terror amongst the white people that at last the Free State Government were obliged to put a commando in the field against him.

Nervousness of bringing on a general scrimmage only prevented it being done earlier. Moshesh openly disavowed any sympathy with the robbers, in proof of which one of his sons was attached to the commando which then proceeded on a wild expedition through the rough country near the source of the Caledon River. Witsi successfully dodged them; but they captured what they were really after, viz. a number of cattle more than equivalent to that demanded in fine, and then, being apprehensive of their families left behind, abruptly returned without having come to any serious engagement. Witsi of course became bolder than ever and so menacing that shortly afterwards the Landdrost of Winburg Mr. J. M. Orpen, a man of quiet disposition though resolute when roused, attacked him so vigorously with a small contingent that he was driven headlong into Basutoland with the loss of all his belongings.

His people were of the Bakolukoe, refugees from Tshaka in no way connected with Moshesh, who nevertheless pleaded for them with such effect that the President, thankful for the opportunity of making an apparent concession, allowed them subsequently to occupy an insignificant tract of wild country on the east bank of the Caledon where they have remained ever since in one of the only native reserves of the Orange Free State, administered by a military commandant with plenary powers.

The Free State burghers struggling to mould their new heritage with its perturbed environment were now destined to be worried by their own kindred. Mr. M. W. Pretorius, President of the new Transvaal

Republic, suddenly appeared at Bloemfontein ambitiously to claim possession of the Orange Free State. By promises of land, low quit-rents and "indentured," *i.e.* slave, children and other decoys he enlisted the encouragement of some of the most desperate characters, and he weakened the political situation in respect of native affairs by coquetting, falsely enough, with Moshesh who for his part relished the chance thrown to him of playing off one great Dutch official against another. So melancholy was President Boshoff about the outlook that at the request of his Volksraad he addressed a piteous appeal to the High Commissioner inviting as a release from their troubles a treaty of alliance with Her Majesty's Government. It was not however responded to.

The Basuto were not blind to the advantage offered them of firing into the chaos of divided counsels at Bloemfontein a statement of their case brought up to date. Moshesh was accordingly advised to draw up a brief, not knowing unto which of the rival Presidents it would be delivered. The document traversed in most original language the long story of his relations with the white people since their advent from Cape Colony. The following extracts refer to points uppermost in his mind :—

To THE PRESIDENT OF THE ORANGE FREE STATE

"THABA BOSIGO,

"21 March, 1856.

"GREAT CHIEF, . . .

"Respecting the limit [boundary] question, it would be wrong in me to keep silent about it, since



it is a great one. . . . Be so good, Sir, as to hear me how I look at that question, about which my whole tribe thinks also as I do.

“When we saw that the Whites crossed the Orange River [in 1836] we wondered at it. They crossed by lots. They begged from the Blacks for pasturages everywhere, one by one, in a very good soft manner. We did not imagine that they would appropriate the land to themselves, and when I heard that they were purchasing farms from each other I hastened to issue a proclamation [Oct. 29, 1844] telling to the Whites: *Do not barter the land, for it is not our custom of us Basuto to do so.* According to our custom, the land belongs to all the people, it is bequeathed to our posterity, it is not disposed of by bargain and also it is not our habit to define limits in it.

“Then [1845] came Maitland [Sir Peregrine], a worthy Chief, truly so. As to him, he said to me, ‘Moshesh, *my children [i.e. the Emigrant farmers] have gone away from me and I don't know where to locate them; grant me room between the Orange and Caledon rivers, towards their junction.*’

“To him I granted, because he had asked very properly of me, without stealing by taking anything away.

“Afterwards came the Major [Warden]. He robbed me of the land from Maitland's [boundary] over towards Jammerberg. I said, ‘That man acts hastily, he robs me of a great piece of land, he robs me of it in a harsh way. In it there are but few Boers, though Poshudi lives within it, and there are villages in it beyond one hundred in number.’ And the Major

said : ‘*I will govern those villages, they are mine.*’ He said besides : ‘*On the Mantatis [Batlokoa] border people trouble you (though it was people let loose by himself) and I will not arrange anything there till you satisfy me about this new limit by subscribing your name to it.*’

“I therefore did put my name to it [October 1849] without the consent of my people. I said ‘That thing will be evident to all men that it is the deed of a fool and perhaps it shall preserve peace between me and the English.’ I said besides : should it one day be fought for [that limit], when the imbecility of it becomes evident the fault will not be attributed to me.

“It happened that Major Hogge came ; he told me, I have been sent by the Queen to hear you. . . . He asked me at a national meeting [Pitso] held on a Sunday . . . ‘Moshesh, do you wish that I should restore unto you your brother Poshudi and your people taken in by Major [Warden]?’ I answered him saying, ‘You have spoken.’ ‘Now,’ he asked, ‘what do you complain of besides?’ And I said, ‘I complain of the Major,’ and he hastened to say, ‘And me too, I am in trouble about him. I have already put him out of office.’ I said besides, that Capt. Baillie has also annoyed me very much by killing people, by depredations made everywhere ; it is him who has destroyed our peace with the Boers. Mynheer Hogge said, ‘I know of it too, a day before yesterday. . . . I gave orders to the magistrate to lodge him into gaol without delay.’

“‘Now,’ I said, ‘the Tambookies also complain. . . .’

“The Major said : ‘What do they complain of?’

And as they were in that national meeting they hastened to say, 'We complain that children have been stolen from us by the Whites . . . and made slaves. They are sixty in number.'

"To this the Envoy of the Queen said: 'Some are amongst the people in the Sovereignty, some have been taken down to Natal. Although things are so, I will make my best and restore them to you. . . .'

"Again, it happened that Clerk [Sir George] called me to a meeting with the Boers. He said to me: . . . 'the Limit by Major Warden . . . is not fair to the Basutos, let their chief point out another more advantageous to us than that of Maitland, that the Boers may be satisfied.'

"I said in answer to him, 'Truly this is a hard concern, but I consent to point out another, that our peace may be consolidated.' I pointed out the one from Coomissie Drift on the Caledon down the Orange River leaving Koesburg on my side.

"That word of mine, I do not conceal it. I stand by it to this day and it is the one which will be established, for it is adhered to by my tribe. . . .

"I do no wrong to the Whites, for we are reckoned by tens of thousands and we have reserved a mere skirt of land. The Boers are counted by thousands only . . . and they extend over a very very wide land.

"Now, great Chief, when your surveyors go to inspect the farms . . . be aware that I will not prevent them provided they do not encroach upon the limit we had spoken of with Sir George Clerk.

"Mark X of Moshesh,

"Chief of the Basutos."

This letter, which reached the hands of President Boshoff, was regarded by him as threatening. It purported to manifest the feelings of tens of thousands of Basuto smarting under injury, penned in, and struggling against the oppression of a small population of white men greedy for land in excess of their wants ; and it ended with a warning that any infringement of the understanding with Sir George Clerk, loose and indefinite as that was, would be resisted. The President, evidently much concerned with the communication, replied only that its meaning was beyond his comprehension. He sent copies of the correspondence to the High Commissioner, observing that hostilities were being provoked by boundary questions and other pretexts ; that the struggle forced upon them would be a bloody one likely to affect also the Cape Colony, from whence he begged that volunteer colonists might be allowed to be recruited for their assistance.

Moshesh's manifesto touched a chord in the conscience of Sir George Grey, viz. that part relating to the enslavement of Tambookie children by Captain Baillie previously referred to. In a gloomy despatch dated May 3, 1856, to the Secretary of State requesting instructions he asserted from statements before him that 210 persons under Basuto protection made captive by us in various engagements had been placed in a state of servitude ; that the names of the buyers, sellers and prices of the captives, the witnesses and circumstances had all been officially reported to our Government at the time. As, whilst the country was British territory, we had failed apparently to disavow the acts or release the captives



Photo by T. Lindsay Fairclough.

THE BROKEN ASSEGAI.



it placed the British Government in a difficult position towards other States with whom we were in treaties bonded to prohibit slavery, but who must find it hard to reconcile our professions with our deeds.

Moshesh supplemented his manifesto to the Orange Free State by a letter to the High Commissioner upon the subject of common reports then rife attributing to him the conduct of secret negotiations with the Colonial Kaffirs then on the verge of rebellion, and surrounding tribes, having for their object the expulsion or extermination of all the white people.

That messengers frequently passed between him and other leading chiefs was no doubt as true as it was rational, seeing that all the tribes were now becoming associated in blood ties by the interchange of girls in marriage ; apart from that too there is nothing illogical in the idea that a common sense of protection prompted tribal combinations. The whole of the Basuto Chief's career so far discredits the notion that at any time he harboured sinister designs against Europeans, many of whom enjoyed his respect and protection. In refuting the insinuation he wrote to the Governor on June 4th, 1856 :—

“ Sir, I am happy in being able to declare that all this is untrue, and that those who have so spoken of me have but one aim—that of bringing my name into disfavour and exciting the whites against me. I am not fond of war. I have proved this often ; and if unhappily it should break out I shall have been dragged into it by men who desire to rob me of a country which several treaties with the English Government bear testimony to

## The Basutos

being mine. At this very moment these same persons seek a pretext for beginning a war I am striving to avoid. I consider I have given sufficient proofs of my fidelity to the Government of the Queen for her subjects to be without any apprehension as regards me."

The character of the correspondence reaching Sir George Grey convinced him that mischief was growing. His religious desire to preserve peace kept him actively employed in proffering counsels of moderation to all parties. He warned the Government in England that it might be necessary for the good of Her Majesty's service that he should interfere to prevent wars breaking out on the borders owing to difficulties to be attributed to ourselves, as they might all more or less be traced to the fact of our leaving the Sovereignty without having in any way defined or settled the boundaries between the Basuto and the Orange Free State, whose Government was necessarily weak from its nature, its newness and its poverty and who were under pressure from its subjects holding grants of land from the British Government of which the Basuto were still in occupation. No words could have been more to the point. Oft repeated, they must have caused bitter reflections in Downing Street. The troubles following the hasty scuttle were coming home to roost.

President Boshoff fretted under the murmurs of his burghers, and gradually increased the vehemence of his expostulations with Moshesh. Writing to the Governor on June 30th he pointed out that war was a horrible infliction ; but to permit the exposure of his people to constant robberies so that they could not keep their



cattle and horses on their own lands without danger of being stolen ; to oblige them continually to be in the saddle in pursuit of thieves, and then when discovering their property and demanding restitution to be answered with excuses or insults—that was an alternative worse than war, for war could not be continued long without the subjection of one or the exhaustion of both parties, which in either case meant finality.

Sir George Grey, on receipt of further correspondence from the President with an intimation that strong measures at the hazard of a general war were indispensable, made up his mind that hostilities were now inevitable. In preparing Her Majesty's Government for it he reiterated in powerful terms that the real cause, no matter what the pretext, was the wicked neglect of the British to adjust boundaries at the time of abandonment. Sorry for his friends the Basuto, he chose the opportunity to record what he believed to be the sentiments of the native tribes north of the Orange River, viz. :—

That they had been sacrificed to some policy they did not understand and were compelled to feel that no fidelity however great could save them from being treated with cruel injustice and insult by the British Government when it suited its purpose ; that close friendship with such a Government should be avoided, for, however fair its professions or generous its actions might appear, its fixed purpose was to deceive and to betray. “ To what fearful results,” he added, “ this feeling if it becomes general among the native tribes may at some future time give birth, I dare not allow myself to imagine.”

If the High Commissioner felt the force of such an indictment, how supreme must have been the bewilderment of the natives themselves who had been the sport of so many changes. His belief in the good faith of the Basuto seems to have had a shock at that moment, for he registered the opinion, based upon authoritative statements from Kaffraria, that they were really implicated in a general South African conspiracy. Moshesh, however, at that moment relieved the situation by informing the President that if the border robbers who were said to be allied to him failed to make compensation within a specified time he would consider them no longer his vassals and would stand aside whilst the burghers chastised them.

This communication enabled the President to make a hopeful statement at the opening of his Volksraad on October 6th, 1856, when he announced that the stock still claimed, through Moshesh, in restitution for robberies totalled 768 horses and 535 cattle—a claim made up by multiplying *actual losses* by four, in terms of the Aliwal Agreement—these losses apart from burnt houses and destroyed crops. After appealing to the patriotism of members should the sword require to be drawn, he stated that a deputation consisting of Messrs. G. Visser and J. Hoffman would be despatched to Thaba Bosigo with an urgent message. The deputation executed its mission, returning with a document as follows :—

“ THABA BOSIGO, 6th November, 1856.

“ In a month from this day I shall pay according to the claims of the Orange Free State Government—horses 762, cattle 393. I will do my best to prevent

robbery so that the farmers may live on their places with security, not being disturbed by my people.

“ Mark X of Moshesh.”

A little delay occurred and then Moshesh wrote to the President :—

“ MORIJA, 12th January, 1857.

“ You have wished me to let you know when I send the cattle and horses you have begged me to get for you. I have been delayed by the rivers, still I have gathered a great many. You will find the number of cattle far greater than horses. I send them by Ramaseatsana and Josias. . . . I entrust those men with 1,387 cattle which, together with 217 brought to Smithfield by Makwai last winter, make a sum of 1,604. At Koesberg those men will still find a number which will be added to them. There are also a few tens of horses.

“ Mark X of Moshesh.”

The cattle were accepted provisionally until the Volksraad could deliberate. It assembled on February 2nd and resolved :—

That cattle were not equivalent to horses ; that the cattle, containing 200 old bulls and calves and many diseased animals, should all be returned except 393 ; that the tender as payment in full should be refused and a further demand made.

The decision and cattle were returned abruptly to Moshesh with additional complaints against the robber chieftains. He acknowledged the decision in a letter of regret.

It is necessary to insert here an extract of an important letter written to the High Commissioner by Mr. John H. Ford, Landdrost of Smithfield, an official of high standing in the State, in order to show that the Free State Government, though holding Moshesh responsible for the acts of certain border chieftains of lawless character, were at the same time inconsistently claiming the rights and jurisdiction over the land on which those chieftains lived.

“SMITHFIELD, 5th November, 1856.

“MY DEAR SIR GEORGE GREY,

“At the last sitting of our Raad the discussion with respect to our relations with the native tribes under Moshesh was carried on with closed doors, but as the President was directed to acquaint Your Excellency with the result and the reasons which induced the Raad to arrive at it, I shall not be guilty of any dereliction of duty in communicating with Your Excellency on the same subject; and I make no apology for so doing, because I am under some apprehension lest the exact and simple facts should not reach Your Excellency through the channel chosen,—a fear I am inclined to entertain, since the President most strenuously opposed any reference being made to Your Excellency, and it was only after he had found that the majority were not to be influenced by him on this point that . . . he abandoned his own object, which was to declare war against Moshesh at once and without any further attempt to obtain an amicable adjustment. . . .

“A copy of the determination eventually arrived at

will no doubt be sent to Your Excellency, but I am not so sure of your hearing the tenor of the resolution which preceded it, and which in reality embodies the whole intention. By this resolution the Raad declared that the boundary of the Free State, in the direction of Basutoland, was that agreed upon between Moshesh and Major Warden and afterwards confirmed by Sir H. Smith.

“Your Excellency should be aware that by this determination all the petty chiefs to whom any of the recent robberies have been traced are rendered subjects of the Free State, as for instance Poshudi, Lebenya, Jan Letelle, etc., so that it would appear inexplicable how under such circumstances this Government should persist in claiming restitution from a Foreign Power for crimes committed by our own subjects.

“This was the point I wished Your Excellency clearly to perceive, and that restitution of stolen property is not the real object, but the expatriation of those chiefs with their people who, by the agreement with Major Warden, were taken under protection of the British Government, and to whom were guaranteed not only the land they were at that time in occupation of, but also all those privileges enjoyed by Her Majesty’s white subjects.

“I need scarcely remark that whenever the resolution of the Raad becomes known to Moshesh, war will be the result. . . .

“(Signed) JOHN H. FORD.”

Moshesh was not aware he had so warm an advocate in the cause of consistency as the magistrate of Smith-

field. He was, however, convinced that the sands of peace were running out and, desirous to the last of avoiding hostilities, he poured out his soul to Sir George Grey. Upon the result of that much was to hang.

“ THABA BOSIGO, 12 *March*, 1857.

“ YOUR EXCELLENCY,

“ I write to acquaint you with the state of my relations with the President of the Orange Free State.

“ I am called upon to make restitution fourfold for thefts committed by my people. The total of stolen cattle is 300, of horses 293. For that I have already sent 1,600 head of cattle and about 50 horses. Many other cattle have at different times been sent back by different chiefs, and been taken from thieves and restored. I have asked Mr. Boshoff for an account of these many times and he has never furnished me with one. I had thought to have paid with cattle, and am convinced that I have paid the full value of those stolen and much more. But Mr. Boshoff has driven the cattle back which I sent in lieu of horses.

“ I shall endeavour to pay the remainder, although the stipulation in the arrangement between Boshoff and me when Your Excellency was at Smithfield has not been followed up ; the spoors have not in most instances been traced into my country, nor have they been handed over to my chiefs to follow it and catch the thieves. Many months, even years after, I am called upon to make restitution and I with the innocent people must pay for the guilty who cannot be found. . . . The complainants are interested in

getting cattle and their declaration alone is the sole evidence. They have also an interest in obtaining a war about cattle in order that they may secure possession of farms which they have in many instances obtained by fraud, and they wish to obtain your sympathy by those means ; but I will disappoint them.

“Believe me the real cause of dispute is ground. They wish to drive my people out. I appeal to Your Excellency to try to prevent war. The English Government is the father of us all. I am also your ally by treaty. You can interfere in the disputes of your children. . . . I am willing to submit the question of the ground to your arbitration, provided the claim of each individual whether white or Mosuto to the farm they claim in the disputed territory be investigated by impartial people sent by you, and that I be given full opportunity to disprove the claims of any. When these claims are all decided I will be willing to speak with you about the advisability of exchanging farms so as to separate the white from the black. . . .

“The Boers however wish to return to the limit made by Major Warden which cut off a great portion of my tribe, and which Major Hogge, General Cathcart and Sir George Clerk declared to be unjust. . . . They claim it in right of the Agreement with Warden which I was forced to sign. It was my agreement to that line which weakened my influence with that portion of my tribe and has made some of them refractory. . . . I have always looked up to the British Government . . . and have always separated myself

from any who have been so infatuated as to attempt rebellion, and have offered my assistance against them. It is my great grief that once my people were engaged in hostilities against Her Majesty's troops. It was caused by mistakes and I hastened to submit when my people were chastised. Believe me, I have no correspondence whatever with any of the chiefs in the Cape Colony, and I challenge the strictest investigation. . . .

“ I remain your faithful ally,

“(Stamped with the seal of) Moshesh.”

This was an honest and binding offer of arbitration on the real issue, viz. land. Had the offer been accepted and a proper delimitation made there is little doubt that the cause of quarrel would have been removed, for the Basuto were anxious, if not to be under the British Government, to be governed by a decision for which it was responsible. Perplexed as they were by the anomalies of Imperial policy, they still clung to their faith in its justice and protection.

The High Commissioner, whose caution at this time was carried to an extreme, acknowledged the letter but did not answer it. It was a lost opportunity. Instead, he made the contents of it known to the Free State Government, whereupon the President upbraided Moshesh for his action and charged him with being accessory to the plots of Pretorius of the Transvaal whom he described as an enemy of the Free State.

The Basuto Chief not unnaturally felt himself



rather isolated at this time. He was under suspicion of the High Commissioner for intriguing with rebellious Kaffraria, evidence of which, according to the Chief Commissioner there, was so clear from intercepted messages as to leave no doubt of his complicity. He was mistrusted by the Orange Free State and used by Pretorius only as a tool for his own purposes. A great combination of whites lay against him ; and, if he did hold questionable converse with others who might divert attention from him, he only did what civilized nations have often done under the same circumstances, though not in the form that semi-barbarians adopt. We cannot discard the view that his secret manœuvres may have encouraged the Cape Colonial rebels to believe he was in sympathy with them ; yet we cannot prove that he had any intention of joining them in their murderous outbreak, or doing more than rejoice at diversions in a time of peril.

The President in opening an Extraordinary Session of his Volksraad alluded with some feeling to the tactics of the Pretorius faction who had not scrupled to instigate a heathen tribe to hostilities against their fellow-countrymen, and was evidently concerned lest the High Commissioner should be so far carried away by the appeal of Moshesh for arbitration as to take his part. He was bound to admit however then, as he had had to do before in public, that the Chief had adopted vigorous measures to check border robbery and was repeatedly delivering up stolen stock he had recovered. These admissions, on parliamentary record, must be noted in mitigation

of charges levelled at the Basuto which were to accumulate and result shortly in the war which had been so long brewing. They afford the strongest proof against the many allegations that the Basuto courted a conflagration.

At the conclusion of the Session of February 1858, the President upon instructions from the Volksraad which had been moved by fresh reports of turbulent proceedings on the frontier wrote definitely to Moshesh stating that, as he could not or would not make reparation and seemed unable to control his vassals, nothing remained but to go to his assistance and punish them. It was regarded as the threat preliminary to action and sufficed for the Basuto to make preparations against attack. Defensive measures were taken to fortify the stronghold at Thaba Bosigo and, under guidance of a deserter from one of the regiments, gunpowder was manufactured so successfully that it compared favourably with that to be purchased at wayside stores.

Matters were hastened by Poshudi who with a large party aggressively patrolled through the disputed territory under the pretence of hunting and roughly ejected the occupants of a Boer farm. Great consternation followed; the farmers fled into laager, sending reports to Bloemfontein of the most alarmist character. At the instigation of Nehemiah, the educated son of Moshesh, who was ubiquitous in writing and riding about to restore confidence, a Conference of Free Staters and Basuto was held on March 3, close to the border to inquire into the conduct of Poshudi, with the result that, although no

assaults with intent were proved, his unruly conduct was unanimously condemned.

The incident, however, furnished the signal throughout the Free State for the burghers to arm and mobilize. Unfortunately, Sir George Grey being misled as to the facts reported to the Secretary of State that, in consequence of a Land Commission having meddled with the boundary inopportunately, the Basuto had invaded the Free State where steps were being taken to retaliate. As a matter of fact nothing of the sort had occurred. Poshudi was actually living within the disputed territory amongst the farmers and his exploit was carried out without the knowledge, consent or aid of the authorities in Basutoland proper. Nevertheless, the fat was in the fire and the whole of South Africa echoed the false news that hostilities had broken out.

Nehemiah and Paulus Moperi (a brother of Moshesh) tried hard to calm the excitement. The former wrote to the President the native version of the *affaire* Poshudi whom he held blameless on the ground that his action was not meant to be warlike but as a forcible protest, after every other remonstrance had failed, against certain Boers whose arbitrary seizure and appropriation of land accorded to him under the British regime was in conflict with the understanding to preserve the *status quo* pending authoritative adjustment of boundaries. There was nothing, he pleaded, to provoke war but the fact that they were to be hunted as black men and Basutos.

Paulus Moperi, a chief of peaceful disposition rarely excited to violence, was conciliatory, yet firm and fearless. Traversing the story of the past and the issues

now at stake, he seemed to stand above the whole crowd in the dignified way that he admonished all against panic which was hurrying people blindly into war. Deprecating the formation of laagers, the sight of which on the border drove the Basuto into frenzy, he bade the farmers be assured that his people were not murderers and would contend if they were forced to do so as fairly as white men. He accused the Boers of wanton provocation and murder by shooting dead a man of Molitsane's sent to ascertain the purpose of an armed patrol which had entered Basutoland. After denying that the threatening attitude of the Free State had been reciprocated in Basutoland he concluded :—

“ If there is to be war, I am sorry for it. We must then fight, you will fight and I too will fight : this must not make us bad friends whatever the result. War is a national quarrel and not a personal one. In fine, the farmers want war ; let them have it ; but I will tell you beforehand, it is not we that wish for it. The farmers long for it because their children are growing up and want farms in our country and think it will put them in possession of immense herds of cattle.”

The next scene in the drama was shifted to the frontier where on March 10, 1858, the President surrounded by his Councillors, Commandants, Landdrosts and Field-Cornets assembled in Krygsraad, the burghers armed and equipped in small parties rallying from all sides to the rendezvous. On that day also Jan Letelle submitted himself humbly as their ally and was received.



Photo by T. Lindsay Fairclough.



The Council of War was presented by the Chairman with a set of questions, their answers to which were to be the verdict. Several were of a temporizing character, to be dismissed with that scant consideration almost invariably shown by men under arms to proposals for peaceful solutions. The very atmosphere of a military camp seems to engender bellicose feelings.

All thoughts centred on the first question, viz. :—

Whether the Krygsraad sees a prospect, with the force now assembled, of commencing hostilities with the likelihood of satisfactory results ?

There was little hesitation in the response, to the effect :—

1. That the interests of the Free State imperatively demand that the course already commenced be prosecuted with vigour and that to recede without the adoption of decisive measures would be attended with most mischievous consequences and danger.

2. That the force now in arms is much too small to commence hostilities : that a new levy of burghers shall take place in order to strengthen the force, and with that view hostilities be postponed for fourteen days ; but in event of expected reinforcements not arriving, no other course remains than, in reliance on God's assistance, to commence with the force now assembled.

3. That a pacification without the recognition of the line on Moshesh's part will be of no use, inasmuch as any peace, without a clear understanding on that point, cannot be permanent.

4. The expenses of the commandos might also be

demanded ; but should Moshesh without delay and in an honourable way comply with other reasonable demands it would be advisable not to insist on repayment ; this will tend to prove that the Free State will not undertake war from bloodthirsty or avaricious motives.

Both sides freely invoked the Almighty's help. Part of the interval to allow for reinforcements was employed by the diplomatic resource of holding a meeting with Nehemiah who went over from Basutoland accompanied by the Rev. Mr. Cochet, a French missionary, and Mr. Orpen ; but permission for the latter to advise Nehemiah was refused. Mr. Orpen incurred the displeasure of the Boers on account of his fearless championship of Basuto rights—so much so that he was rudely arrested and warned to leave the Free State within twenty-four hours.

The meeting was abortive. The speakers rambled through the controversy affecting farms claimed by them and violated by Basuto subjects. Nehemiah warmly defended his father's cause, maintaining that the Free State coming to parley with guns in its hands frustrated any possible chance of settlement, just as the farmers had infuriated Poshudi and others by dispossession and threats.

Whilst the meeting was being held the President composed a letter for Nehemiah to deliver to Moshesh. It was an eight-days ultimatum—to be dealt with in the next chapter.

Before passing on it is necessary to consider certain features of the position. The two races were on the



brink of war. It was not that they hated each other so much as that they were the victims of much misunderstanding, partly due to the vagaries of British policy, partly to the scheming of adventurers and land-grabbers who too often got the approval of Major Warden and other officials for occupying ground which the natives were forbidden to expropriate and the Government had no power to give away. A succession of Governors made treaties, laws, boundaries and pledges which were alternately confirmed and disallowed. Inspired by the best intentions, they created problems and pirouetted round them.

The Basuto Chief Moshesh was induced in loyalty and fear to attach his name to sketches, called boundary lines, which he had neither verified nor agreed to—in his own words he consented to sign only as a dog consents to follow the man who drags it with a rope. These boundaries were not defined properly nor observed by any of the parties; they were violated at pleasure. Guarantees were given to the Boers of farms in disputed territory without survey or titles granted, and to the natives that the same identical land was theirs still; so that it was a choice of evils, *i.e.* to remove Boers from farms they had improved or natives from land they cherished.

Then the British Government retired, making the extraordinary declaration through their authorized agents that all persons were safeguarded in their rights but all previous arrangements made under authority were annulled. The Basutos believed that all lines were shattered; the Boers believed they remained unaltered. A lot of native chieftains living in disputed

territory, vassals of Moshesh, were squeezed out—driven from pillar to post ; they were secretly loyal to the Chief whom they respected and feared but, being in a vulnerable position, had to run with the hare and hunt with the hounds. They stood to lose the game no matter how the cards fell and, being desperate, drew the nations into war.

## CHAPTER XIV

Cry havoc and let slip the dogs of war.

SHAKESPEARE.

The **Ultimatum** is followed by a **Declaration of War**:  
hostilities follow with **disastrous results to the Free State**:  
the horrors of war: an **Armistice** proposed

1858

**C**REDIT must be given to both the Free Staters and the Basuto for believing that each had right on its side. Many reasons for so believing had been advanced by the respective parties. The Basuto as a nation were guiltless of the allegation that they had through the action of Poshudi precipitated a conflict. Apart from the desire to preserve peace it was manifestly their safest policy to allow their adversaries to open the ball in order to win if possible the moral sympathy of the British to whom Moshesh had submitted the offer of arbitration. That offer had a strong influence upon the situation because both sides felt and feared that, in whichever direction the British Government threw its sympathy, such a combination, though moral only, might be disastrous to its rival. The Basuto perhaps were more quickened to this view

and therefore, though actively preparing, restrained themselves resolutely from movements or action tending to justify an accusation that they were eager for war or were the first aggressors. There is nothing in the records of the time to show that at that critical moment they committed any act of flagrant provocation by word or deed.

The ultimatum dated March 11, 1858, referred to in the previous chapter from the President Boshoff to Moshesh, after reciting the wrongs so long suffered at the hands of the Basuto and verifying the measures found necessary for the Orange Free State to take in vindication of its rights, made a set of demands upon the answers to which without evasion war or peace would depend ; such answers to reach Bloemfontein within eight days, *i.e.* on or before the morning of March 19.

The demands were :—

1. To force and oblige Poshudi and Lebenya to pay within one month the damages caused by them to burgher farms ;
2. To promptly prevent cattle-stealing and to remove Poshudi and Lebenya far away from the boundaries ;
3. To pay up without delay arrears of compensation for horses already due by agreement and further compensation for recent thefts ;
4. To respect the Warden boundary until altered by mutual consent, or by arbitration of the Governor of the Cape if the terms and conditions could be acceded to as fair and reasonable ;

5. To prevent armed Basutos from entering the Free State.

These demands looked well enough on paper for Colonial and English consumption. They served apparently to account for the grievances of those factions who clamoured for war, reckless of consequences so long as it might bring to them land and cattle. But when analyzed they must be regarded as something more than sophistical—they were incongruous and inequitable, that is to say :—

1. Poshudi and Lebenya were treated as subjects by Moshesh yet the land they were living on was claimed as being within Free State jurisdiction ; Moshesh was called upon to overawe them, in doing which he would have to trespass with arms on ground forbidden to him.

2. He was ordered to remove them forcibly ; in so doing he would deprive them of rights conferred by British authority.

3. He was required to pay or compel payment of compensation for damages alleged against the said persons his vassals, the greater part of which had been assessed and paid for by Sir George Clerk out of Imperial funds, and the remainder had been collected, tendered and refused as being unconventional.

4. He was bidden to respect a boundary he persistently disputed ; the mere fact of his doing so, unconditionally, was bound to prejudice his claim under arbitration.

Apprehensive probably of British interference, the

President wrote at once to the High Commissioner setting forth the circumstances that had led to the alternative of war forced upon them; complaining bitterly of Mr. Orpen and others resident in Cape Colony to whose meddling and misstatements might be ascribed the late misconduct and insolence of the Basuto; and imploring that no obstacles be placed in the way of volunteers going to the assistance of their kindred in the hour of extremity.

The reply from Moshesh was erroneously dated April 22. It was however received in Bloemfontein on March 21, so must have been written on or before the day the ultimatum expired, viz. March 19, as it would take two days in transmission by hand over seventy miles. It was short and temperate. The Chief rejected the idea that he could be tied to the Warden line which had been condemned and nullified by Hogge, Cathcart and Clerk; he welcomed the possibility of arbitration by Sir George Grey and, deprecating settlement by force of arms, urged the removal from the border of the burgher commandos and laagers which were productive of excitement and sources of danger.

The President answered in a letter of March 22 announcing his dissatisfaction at the Chief's retort, the nature of which placed it beyond his power to dismiss the burghers assembled under arms; on the contrary, he felt it his duty to proceed with measures now unavoidable and begged to enclose a Declaration of War, the blame for which he said rested entirely on the Basuto.

The Declaration of War was promulgated at Bloem-

fontein on March 19 in a long Proclamation representing the Free State side of the case. The material points of it are given in the following extract :—

“ PROCLAMATION

“ Whereas the inhabitants have for these many years past been exposed to great damage and losses of cattle, horses and other property through the various tribes of natives acknowledging the paramount authority of the Chief Moshesh, without adequate compensation having ever been made for any of the offences in question, or the offenders having been punished, the consequence of which has been that cattle-stealing and encroachments on the territory of this State became so aggravated that, towards the end of the year 1855, hostilities had already begun to appear inevitable, and would unquestionably have taken place had not the Chief Moshesh been induced, by the mediation of the Governor of the Cape Colony, to enter into a compact with the President, whereby he agreed to respect the lands which were in possession of burghers of this State, and consented to his subjects being removed from them, whereby he engaged to pay regard to the law against vagrancy in force in this State, and to cause his subjects to obey it, and undertook to cause indemnification for stolen cattle and horses to be made, from the period of the taking over of the State from the British Government, and likewise engaged to prevent robberies, and to punish offenders for the future ;

“ But whereas the Chief Moshesh has in no respect adhered to the compact in question, inasmuch as the

promised compensation has been but partially paid, and that with refuse Kaffir cattle and horses, while those that have been stolen remain in possession of the Basutos and their captains, while the vagrant law is continually, and in spite of all warnings, contravened in different parts of the State by the Basutos, who scour the country without any pass in armed bands of several hundreds, whether to hunt game, which they destroy and leave lying in heaps, or under other pretexts, declaring that they have no need of passes, as being the rightful owners of the soil. Whereas cattle and horse stealing has been uninterruptedly continued on a greater or smaller scale, insomuch that in Winburg District horses and beeves to the amount of some hundreds have been recently swept off; and inasmuch as certain captains, among whom are Poshudi, a brother of Moshesh, and Lebenya, have from time to time so persisted in harassing the inhabitants of Caledon River District, by threats of a hostile character, that the latter have been obliged to leave their dwellings, and have lately gone to such lengths as to squat in armed bands on inhabited farms, and after their occupiers have quitted them have laid waste and destroyed houses, orchards and gardens, so that at the beginning of last February the frontier inhabitants were once more forced to quit their farms and to congregate in laagers;

“And whereas the Chief Moshesh has haughtily refused to comply with two very equitable proposals made to him by the Landdrost of Smithfield—viz. that compensation should be made for the desolated farms according to a fair valuation, and secondly that



the Basutos shall be driven from the farms of which they have lately and unjustly taken possession :

“ His Honour the President has accordingly resolved, after consultation with the members of Volksraad, commandants and field-cornets assembled at the camp between Orange and Caledon Rivers on the 3rd and 11th of this current month, to desire of the Chief Moshesh distinct and unequivocal answers to the following questions on which shall hinge the issue of peace or war : [in terms of demands on previous pages of this chapter.]

“ To which questions Moshesh was requested to send a written answer on or before this day.

“ And whereas no answer has been sent, and it thus clearly appears that Moshesh is disinclined towards peace, and there are moreover the clearest indications that Moshesh excuses and justifies the proceedings of Poshudi and other captains, and claims as his own territory a large, inhabited, cultivated and improved portion of this State, and considers the burghers who reside therein as his subjects :

“ Wherefore His Honour the President, in consideration of the facts and reasons above stated, with the advice and consent of the Executive Council, and by virtue of the authority conceded to him by the Volksraad, declares that no other course is now open for the State than to assert its rights against the guilty Basuto tribes by force of arms, to consider and treat them as enemies until they have rendered full satisfaction for all the insults and injuries to the authorities, burghers and inhabitants of this State. And the inhabitants and burghers are hereby called on to do

their duty amid these painful circumstances, in defence of their rights, in the firm reliance that the Almighty will crown their efforts with an honourable and permanent peace.

“ Done at Bloemfontein, the 19th March, 1858.

“ J. BOSHOFF, State President.

J. W. SPRUIJT, Govt. Secretary.

“ By order.”

The task the Free State had entered upon was no light one. Having no organized police or other force, no artillery, short of munitions, divided amongst themselves owing to the intrigues of Pretorius, with practically an empty treasury and no credit abroad, they essayed to overcome a formidable enemy nearly ten times as strong in numbers and united in a sense of injury, ensconced in a land of fortresses from whence swift incursions could be executed upon a territory where some thousands of almost unprotected women and children were abiding. It is a tribute to the courage of those Free Staters who were prepared to incur such a risk in what they deemed to be a right cause ; no less was it a tribute to the character of the Basuto that a murderous onslaught by them upon non-combatants was not seriously dreaded.

By unhappy circumstances the first blow after the Declaration of War was directed upon the natives residing at a mission station. The Boers were a highly religious people ; but they never could bring themselves to like missionaries on account of the impression universally felt that the effect upon natives of Christian influence was to make them lazy and insolent.



Photo by Capt. French.

THE GORGE OF THE MALETSUNYANE RIVER BELOW THE FALLS.  
P. 224]



Beersheba was the name of the mission established on the farm Zevenfontein on the Caledon River set apart twenty years earlier by Moshesh for the purpose. There was no question of its ownership by the mission ; but upon the extensive farm which fell within the disputed territory resided a community of different clans, under the pastorate of the Rev. Mr. Rolland, all more or less faithful to the supremacy of Moshesh with whom they were in frequent communication. It lay in the path of the advancing burghers who deemed it of high military importance not to leave a doubtful enemy in their rear. Accordingly, on March 22, 1858, Mr. J. Sauer, the Landdrost of Smithfield, acting upon instructions disposed his forces so as to ambush a drift over the Caledon which Basuto were in the habit of frequenting on their way to the station, whilst his main body was thrown out to ward off attack as he proceeded with a contingent to disarm the mission natives.

According to Sauer's official report he surrounded the station at daylight on the morning of the 23rd March and summoned the residents four times within the space of two hours to surrender their arms. Mooi, a Baralong headman belonging to Moroko, complied ; but the Basuto refused and showed a hostile attitude, whereupon he opened fire and killed thirty. A patrol of Nehemiah's crossing the Caledon with the apparent intention of assisting their comrades fell into the ambush laid for them and lost twenty killed. The burgher loss was two slightly wounded and one horse. They captured over 3,000 native cattle and horses.

Mr. Rolland's recorded account differs materially.

According to him all the militant men of his congregation under the chieftain Moiletsi had left the station and gone to Basutoland when the place was surrounded without previous warning ; one summons was given for surrender of all weapons, failing compliance with which in five minutes firing would begin. He immediately began to collect arms and while doing so firing opened, the bullets raining in by hundreds. Then came another summons to deliver all cattle within five minutes. The chieftains Mooi and Mareka at once obeyed but those at a distance did not hear the order and failed. Then followed a fresh discharge of musketry causing death and confusion. A bewildered party of ten sought refuge in a ravine where they were hunted down and shot. Beersheba was then pillaged and destroyed, its only fault being that it lay on the frontier. The missionary who witnessed the destruction of his life's labours states that he was then driven away and the two headmen Mooi and Mareka sent to prison.

Between these two accounts we must look for the truth. But the fact remains that thus the first blood was shed and booty captured by the Boers. It might have been expected to rouse the Basuto to take the offensive vigorously ; but they were not moved to do so for motives by which, as will hereafter appear, Moshesh declared he was actuated.

The attitude likely to be taken up by Sir George Grey towards the belligerents was anxiously looked for. It was revealed in a Proclamation of Neutrality issued by him on March 24 wherein he brought into force the Imperial Foreign Enlistment Act making it a

misdemeanour for any of Her Majesty's subjects either to engage in the warlike operations going on or to procure volunteers for that purpose. In transmitting a copy of the Proclamation to the Secretary of State he pointed out that, though purporting to preserve a strict neutrality, Her Majesty's Government was far from doing so inasmuch as by existing Conventions the white people in the Free State were allowed to obtain from the seaboard arms and ammunition for destruction of the natives who were on the other hand prohibited from getting similar munitions for their own defence. The reasons which at that time and ever since have existed for not allowing native tribes to purchase such supplies for use in rebellion or in slaying each other are supreme. Yet the prohibition referred to by the Governor bears the interpretation to-day of being a heavy penalty imposed upon one side only in a fair fight between two worthy antagonists.

In the neighbourhood of Korannaberg, not far from the present town of Ficksburg, another commando under Commandant W. J. Pretorius fell in with the contingents of Paulus Moperi and Molitsane who, according to the official report of March 26, suffered a loss of from thirty-five to forty killed and were driven towards the mountains, one Boer named De Lange being killed through his own indiscretion in galloping alone into the midst of the enemy, one wounded and another placed *hors de combat* by the bursting of his gun.

A strong southern commando under the Commandant-General Weber moving on the same day from the direction of the present town of Rouxville, assisted by Jan Letelle as an ally, met and checked at

Vechtkop a reconnaissance led by Nehemiah who lost six men. Next day the Vechtkop mountain, the headquarters of Poshudi, was assaulted ; the natives retired and were pursued into Poshudi's village which was wholly pillaged and destroyed by the native allies. The Basuto loss in the two days was about thirty killed ; one Boer was wounded and numbers of cattle captured.

On the 3rd April the same southern commando under the Commandant-General, flushed with its success over Poshudi, suffered a bad reverse in an attack upon an ugly place, a few miles within Basutoland, called the Hell, into which, strange to say, with all their experience, they were drawn indiscreetly by the tempting sight on the slopes around of herds of cattle which they were allowed to round up without molestation. When well mewed up in the inferno and off their guard, the Basuto under Letsie, whose powder and shooting were much at fault, closed down upon them with the assegai and though losing sixty-one in the rush killed sixteen of the Boers and recovered most of the captured stock. The commando retreating in close order almost back to back got away without further loss, clinging, by the help of their native allies the Korannas and Bastards some of whom also fell, to 620 cattle, 874 sheep and 27 horses ; but the dead bodies of their comrades were sorrowfully left behind.

This early catastrophe appears to have brought home to them the magnitude of the enterprise they had embarked upon, for they decided, after a first bold resolution to follow it up and recover the bodies, to abandon the project for the present and fall back some miles to Jammerberg Drift on the Caledon in order to



hold a council of war and formulate more comprehensive plans in conjunction with the northern commando now operating independently. The result of that council was twofold. It enabled them first to deliberate as regards the evident tactics of the Basuto which were : to drive the bulk of their cattle into the inner mountains and then to act on the defensive, refusing as far as possible to be drawn into action except upon ground favourable to themselves, enticing the Boers on to such ground under feint of retreat. With the knowledge that the Basuto were indifferent to the defence of villages and outposts, it was determined to consolidate the entire Free State forces under a new Commandant-General, viz. F. Senekal, then to form two powerful columns, one to operate from the south and the other from the north ; these were to fight their way to Thaba Bosigo and in combination to assault it.

The secondary result of the council was for the President to address hasty communications first to his kindred in the South African Republic and secondly to the High Commissioner. To the former he appealed warmly for assistance in this hour of trial when the burghers were battling with a savage foe saturated with outrage and encouraged, if not by the sympathy, by the acts of the British Government, whose Proclamation of Neutrality cut away the help that the Dutch in Cape Colony were otherwise willing to render. In pitiful language he painted what was clearly the situation, viz. the hopeless plight in which the Free State was landed, to rescue them from which was the common duty of all civilized Christians.

With Sir George Grey he remonstrated in wounded

tones for preventing the recruitment of volunteers for aid in a dire strait to which the British Government had by its neglect contributed: neutrality in such case was unbecoming a civilized Government whose people, if allowed the freedom of their own instincts, could not view the struggle between Christian and barbarian without being earnestly solicitous of helping. Specifying the losses already experienced, severe in consideration of the slender community, and anticipating the lamentable tidings any day might bring, he prayed the High Commissioner in the name of humanity towards unprotected families to withdraw the neutrality proclamation.

In the light of subsequent history which records the bloodthirsty raids by savage tribes and the murders of inoffensive people on their homesteads in different parts of South Africa, our sympathies are bound to flow towards the settlers of 1858 in the Orange Free State. Whether they had acted with circumspection, or had been betrayed by British policy, they were then in a sore dilemma. But let it be noted that they consisted as a whole of bold and fearless spirits who quailed not before danger. All annals bear witness that no finer men and women ever went forth to pioneer the wild regions of the earth.

Reverting to the northern column under Commandants Senekal and W. Pretorius: after clearing the country in front of them as related on March 26th, they threw up a stiff entrenchment at Cathcart's Drift on the site of the old British camp. From thence they reconnoitred in small parties hoping to draw the natives out into the open plains thereabouts but with-

out much success. Perceiving on April 12th a body of the enemy patrolling under the slopes of the Berea mountain, a burgher force of 300 men crossed the river to attack them on apparently favourable ground. Whilst hotly engaged in the operation they discovered masses of Basuto sweeping round to cut off their escape. The enveloping movement was frustrated only with the greatest difficulty, the commando beating a hasty retreat upon their camp just in time to avoid annihilation. A hand-to-hand encounter ensued on the banks of the river over which the Basuto swarmed in pursuit and attacked the camp itself. The attack was beaten off but renewed at daybreak next morning with vigour until sunset ; the natives failed to make a breach but maintained their positions. At sunrise on the 14th the siege operations were continued, the Basuto having seized during the night a hill commanding the camp. This hill was gallantly stormed by Commandant Senekal at the head of fifty burghers who held it for an hour but were then compelled by overwhelming numbers to retire, upon which the enemy closed in from all sides for a furious onslaught at close quarters. The official reports, from which this account is taken, state that the spectacle was terrible and the attack ferocious, the enemy charging on repeatedly for four hours without interruption until from sheer exhaustion they were obliged to give way in a general retreat towards the mountains which was followed up as effectively as the burghers had strength to do. Great havoc was inflicted upon the Basuto whose excess of numbers was neutralized by the failure of their home-made powder to attain range or velocity. The Boers

were fortunate in not having to mourn the loss of more than seventeen killed and wounded.

Deeply impressed with the conviction that the hand of the Almighty had shielded them, otherwise, as the report stated, not one would have been spared, it was determined immediately to evacuate the camp by reason of the dead Kaffirs lying round it.

As in the case of the southern disaster, this affair too gave rise to reflection. The Free State had received a rude shock in learning the fact that, however gallantly a comparative handful of its burghers had withstood the onslaught of thousands, their enemy, hitherto regarded only as clever horsemen equal to crafty manœuvres and rapid movements, were equally capable of making a sustained infantry attack on a fortified position. That somewhat altered the situation from a military point of view. Moreover, it dawned upon some of the more thoughtful leaders that by carrying the war across the borders into Basutoland—no doubt a sound policy if there were reserve forces to back it up—they were inviting the Basuto to make counter attacks on the defenceless Free State, besides giving Moshesh the advantage of claiming sympathy on the plea of having forborne to fight until forced by aggression to defend his country.

The southern column, except for occasional skirmishes in which a few Basuto were killed, remained encamped at Jammerberg Drift anxiously awaiting intelligence of their confederates in the north before commencing to carry out the plan of advance for a combined attack on Thaba Bosigo from two directions. The bad news of the operations at Cathcart's Drift travelled quickly by

scouts and was shortly followed by the whole northern column which on April 25th effected a junction with the southern column at a point nearly midway between the two camps. Then, after consultation, it was resolved to attack with the united columns the mountain village of Matsieng, a fortress where resided Letsie the eldest son of Moshesh.

Its situation was on the heights immediately above the Christian settlement of Morija, the head-quarters of the French Protestants, where churches, schools and other buildings on a considerable scale had been erected. Matsieng, sheltered under the brows of steep precipices, was difficult of approach from the front; a plateau above was the key to the position and this was seized by a contingent of the Boers after forcing a distant pass and rapidly making a wide detour, whilst the main body engaged attention by feigning a frontal assault. The result was that Letsie with about 4,000 of his warriors after light skirmishing retired leisurely across the plateau to Thaba Bosigo, there to await the threatened attack upon the historic stronghold.

On gaining against little resistance possession of the Matsieng village the Free Staters beheld a sight which maddened them with fury. Exhibited in ghastly array were portions of the mutilated bodies of some of their comrades who had fallen at the Hell, preserved either as trophies or as material for use by native doctors in concocting vile war medicines composed partly of human remains. In the outburst of outraged feeling and angry passion they levelled the villages all round, demolishing also all the adjacent mission property except a church and one small building in personal

occupation of Mr. Maeder, one of the missionary brothers. Nothing could have tended more to kindle feelings of hate than this loathsome mutilation, of the perpetration of which the missionaries were ignorant, and Moshesh, so far as can be learnt, was innocent. He had of course to bear the burden of the sins of others by suffering the resentment shown by all the settlers of whatever nationality to his tribe for many years after—a resentment shared to the full by every white man in South Africa who heard of the incident.

Much indignation was roused by the destruction of Morija Mission. Urged by the Society, the French Consul at Cape Town appealed to Her Majesty's Government for protection and compensation for his countrymen in Basutoland. Petitions were also sent in on behalf of several English traders whose entire property was looted or destroyed. Her Majesty's Government declined to interfere, regarding the unhappy circumstances as one of the inevitable consequences of war; but the Free State Government eventually awarded the sum of £100 towards the construction of new school buildings.

The Boers alleged in justification for wrecking the mission that from actual observation and information declared to be correct they had reason to be positive that the Rev. Mr. Arbousset, the presiding missionary, had with the English traders personally encouraged and assisted the Basuto. This was however warmly repudiated by Mr. Arbousset who avowed that he and his family together with the traders and their families all sought refuge in a neighbouring cave and took no part whatever in the fighting; sworn declarations



MORIYA TRAINING INSTITUTION : VIEW FROM WEST.





of the traders, whose losses were estimated at about £3,000, were to the same effect, though it is not clear that any sound reason existed for their flight. Had they remained in peaceful occupation of their houses and stores probably no damage would have ensued, for the Boers are notorious as respecters of property under such circumstances. Yet, believing the suspicions and seeing the stores containing food and clothing deserted when they were suffering from hunger and cold, it is almost inconceivable that they or any army would not have plundered freely. Voluminous correspondence ensued upon this subject, resulting in a final despatch from the High Commissioner stating there was abundant evidence to absolve Mr. Arbousset from the imputation that he had acted as a combatant or done anything unworthy of his profession.

Excited by the memories of the gruesome discovery at Matsieng the burgher levies, numbering perhaps about 1,000 men (the exact strength cannot be traced), marched in solid formation in a line parallel with the Caledon River, laying waste the open country between Morija and Thaba Bosigo. Arriving at the latter place on May 5th they found every pass barricaded and the summit in military occupation of Basuto hosts, aided it was said by ten or twelve Englishmen armed with large-bore guns. Although the Free Staters gained the advantage in some minor skirmishes, their hopes of winning the fortress and thus perhaps ending the war were dissipated when they came to place a true value upon the effort required. With the force and supplies at their disposal they could neither surround it, nor

carry on a siege, nor storm its frowning precipices without artillery to clear the advance. At a council of war that evening, after a debate full of disappointment and bitterness, it was resolved by the majority present to abandon all attempts and suspend operations, whereupon the army, composed mostly of conscripts called out under the Commando Law, broke up hastily and scattered in trepidation of the fate that might have befallen their homesteads.

In order to apprise the inhabitants of the Free State of the condition of affairs and the reason for this sudden dissolution, the President caused a public notice to be issued in the following terms (translated from Dutch):—

#### “GOVERNMENT NOTICE

“For general information it is hereby made known, That whereas the majority of Officers of the Council of War (Krygsraad) with the forces before ‘Thaba Bosigo’ are of opinion that extended leave should be granted to the Burghers to rest after their field operations, and to enable them to prepare themselves for a further expedition (in case it may be necessary) and to provide themselves with the necessities for such expedition ;

“As it is considered that the objects of the recent expedition have been attained by the punishment of the Basuto Chiefs Poshuli and Letsie, for their former offences against this state, it has been resolved to terminate the hostilities at least so long as no new cause for further operations shall be given, or if there is no other

cause which exists to call up an armed force, and consequently the armed force is, therefore, disbanded.

“By the order of the President,

“J. W. SPRUIJT (Govt. Secretary).

“GOVERNMENT OFFICES, BLOEMFONTEIN,  
11th May, 1858.”

Behind this notice lay a deeper meaning, viz. that the Government was overwhelmed with its burden and must seek mediation or negotiate for peace. In issuing it the President was influenced by motives other than those arising from the failure of his forces before Thaba Bosigo and their abrupt disbandment. The public mind had for some time been deeply disturbed by the fact that the Basuto, who could not be expected to remain passive whilst their country was being invaded, had created diversions by well-organized raids on an extensive scale. In the south, Moirosi a vassal of Moshesh and other Orange River clans crossed that river and swept through the lower Free State almost down to Aliwal North burning farms and carrying off stock. This helped to rouse some of the Cape Colonial Kaffirs who were on the brink of rebellion. In the north, mounted bodies of Basuto scoured the Winburg District reducing many of the farms to ruins. But a feeble resistance could be offered to them, so that they cleared off such of the farmers' property as could be found. These expeditions were evidently preconcerted and it is noticeable that they took place simultaneously on dates immediately following the invasion of Basutoland from the Cathcart's Drift base.

It all tended to show that in Moshesh the Free State had to meet a General of no mean order, for nothing was calculated to demoralize the burgher forces in the field so much as reprisals of this character. He had held his hand until invasion gave him the excuse to retaliate and then, obedient to his orders, his clansmen so far as can be gathered scrupulously refrained from harming women and children. If therefore it came to arbitration his side of the case might claim, he no doubt argued, a certain amount of sympathy. His prudent designs were however damned in great measure by the revolting occurrence at Matsieng which disfigured his reputation and was to rankle for many a day.

If President Boshoff did not inspire the resolution of the Commandant-General and burghers at Thaba Bosigo to suspend hostilities, there is reason to suppose he anticipated it, for on the 27th April he represented to the High Commissioner that the critical state of affairs had been made worse by the neutrality policy which had shut off help from the whites in South Africa and encouraged the natives. The prospect of co-operation from the Transvaal, he said, was hopeless unless under conditions of incorporation with that State, a humiliation to which the Free State indignantly refused to assent. He concluded with the following appeal:—

“The losses and sufferings of the people in this State may be irretrievable unless some other powerful intercession may procure us a favourable change, or put a stop to all the bloodshed and spoliation which has

already taken place. Anything which your Excellency may be able to do in this respect would be thankfully acknowledged as a humane and Christian act."

The communication reached Sir George Grey during the sitting of the Cape Colonial Parliament to which he submitted it for deliberation as the crisis was too acute for him to risk delay in awaiting instructions by oversea mail from the Imperial Government. Both Houses of Parliament immediately considered in debate the Governor's message. As their advice was to determine the action he should take, the results of their proceedings are appended :—

RESOLUTION OF THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL OF THE  
CAPE COLONY

"May 5, 1858.

"That a respectful address be presented to His Excellency the Governor, thanking him for his message relative to the melancholy state of affairs in the Orange Free State, and expressing the cordial approval of this Council of a friendly mediation on the part of His Excellency, and their earnest hope that he may thus be enabled to restore peace and amicably to settle all differences between the President of the Free State and the Basuto Chief."

RESOLUTION OF THE HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY

"It is the opinion of this House that His Excellency the Governor should be requested by this House to tender his services to mediate between the President

of the Free State and the Chief of the Basutos with the view of bringing about a termination of the disastrous war now raging in their territories, and of settling the disputes between them which have unfortunately led to the war; but it is the opinion of this House that, in case of either power declining to accept His Excellency's mediation, His Excellency should not further interfere or compromise this Colony in the differences existing between the Free State and the Basutos."

Armed with these requisitions and reckoning upon approval from England, Sir George Grey offered the belated mediation that, had it been granted when proffered two months earlier, might have saved much bloodshed. He wrote on May 6 to the President and to Moshesh identical letters stating that, subject to the acceptance of his offer by both sides, he was prepared to mediate in the hope of bringing to a close the unhappy state of things existing. To each he also proposed as a preliminary the mutual exchange of communications with the idea of arranging an armistice until he should have had time to consider the terms under which he would approach his labours.

It is hard to imagine a suggestion more advantageous to the President. It seemed to afford him the happy opportunity to climb down with a show of propriety from his dreadful position of impotency to take the offensive, or check the incursions of savage tribes against which his distracted burghers were clamouring for help. The High Commissioner must have appreciated the human side when practically com-

manding the President to adopt what would under other circumstances have been a most mortifying course, viz. that of asking a Kaffir chief to suspend hostilities. Similarly the command was calculated to bring a measure of relief to Moshesh who, if the truth was known, must have equally welcomed it; for none knew better than he the intoxication his wild people were under from success and how much harder it might daily become to curb the excesses they were capable of. If in this respect he encountered opposition from his sons it was counterbalanced by the entire body of French missionaries who quickly realized the danger of fanaticism.

But unfortunately the President, full no doubt of despair, compromised his opportunity. Without waiting for the despatch of Sir George Grey above alluded to he wrote two days before its arrival a letter to Moshesh suggesting an Armistice on the ground that President Pretorius had offered his services to intervene for the restoration of peace. The letter ran thus:—

“GOVERNMENT HOUSE, BLOEMFONTEIN,  
“12th May, 1858.

“GREAT CHIEF MOSHESH,

“We have been now nearly two months at war, much blood has been shed and injury inflicted on both sides; as a man and a Christian I would wish to see an end to ruin and the destruction of life. Mr. Pretorius, the President of the South African Republic, has offered his services to bring about a cessation of hostilities, and my burghers have consented to retire into their State for a while. I have therefore thought

proper to write you this letter, requesting to be informed whether you are willing to receive either Mr. Pretorius or a Deputation to be sent by me who shall be instructed to propose certain terms to you, and if you are willing to do so, whether you will give instructions to your people to let them pass unmolested and safe.

“(Signed) J. BOSHOFF,

“President Orange Free State.”

The ink of that letter was scarcely dry when President Boshoff received the High Commissioner's despatch of May 6, previously alluded to, assenting to mediate and indicating the steps preliminary to it. Upon that he had to act at once. He had to explain to Sir George Grey the proposal he had just made for a Deputation to go and negotiate with the Basuto, to play up to that proposal by sending the Deputation, and with the best grace possible to put off the intervention of Pretorius who had arrived at Winburg for the purpose. The reply from Basutoland, unpleasant reading though it was, made the way easier, and his most disagreeable task for the moment was to pacify Sir George Grey for having called him and Pretorius simultaneously as mediators.



## CHAPTER XV

An Armistice agreed to: Free State are obliged to make overtures for peace: Sir George Grey called in and makes a fine effort to mediate and adjust the boundary: Moshesh after seeking and accepting arbitration fails to attend a Conference to further it and shows up badly

1858

MOSHESH was not alarmed at the prospect of meeting President Pretorius of the Transvaal. Whenever that gentleman appeared on the scene it became the signal for intrigues which from the Basuto point of view were useful in weakening the cohesion of the white people. The march of events had left the Chief so much the temporary master of the situation that he felt no scruple in readily assenting to the proposal for a Free State Deputation to come and stipulate for peace. His reply to it addressed to President Boshoff, though containing a good deal of truth, was couched in terms of caustic irony quite out of place from one in his position to the head of a civilized State. It was sure to wound the sensitive Free Staters, as it did, more even than a reverse in battle. It is said that, before answering, he called

a large Pitso (gathering) of his people and, after reviewing according to his construction the whole course of affairs prior to and since the Declaration of War, invited their opinion. Some were in favour of declining all negotiations; but the leading men advocated that there was everything to gain and nothing to lose by listening to overtures and that the reply should be in the words of the Chief's harangue into which he had introduced magniloquence in keeping with the vanity of the auditory he was addressing. Being unable to read or write, one of his educated sons wrote out for him to sign in Sesuto a letter which when translated read as follows :—

*From* CHIEF MOSHESH *to* PRESIDENT ORANGE  
FREE STATE

“THABA BOSIGO,  
“16th May, 1858.

“GOOD FRIEND,

“I, Moshesh, do greet you, Boshof, my chief and master. Your messenger came in last night with a letter, in which your Honour begins to speak of peace. I am sorry that you ever did speak of war. It is not Moshesh who began war, and I must add I have not fought any battle as yet. At the commencement of the past sad affairs, I thought that the whole of the war was intended against Poshudi, and you well know that you found him alone in his town, without any other chief to help him, but when you attacked the innocent and harmless Zevenfonteiners [Beersheba] I was surprised and also grieved beyond all comprehension. I then gave orders to all my

captains to fall back upon Thaba Bosigo, and it is due to your warriors to acknowledge that since the day war was declared they never fell in with either Molapo, Paulus Moperi, Molitsane or any other captain, till you met them on the banks of the Caledon River. They only found on their way the people of one isolated village, and also a few old men and sick people. This much can I safely assert about the eastern commando.

“I had given similar orders to those who were fighting on the west, and you know that even at Zevenfontein you only found a few men who never meant to go to the war; all the fighting men had already left their doomed town.

“Did Moirosi, who lives on the banks of the Orange River, molest you in any way? I left Poshudi alone, where he was, because you said he was a robber. Letsie had orders to fall back also, and, if he attacked you at the place called ‘Hell,’ he disobeyed orders, and at last I strongly enjoined on my people, without excepting the smallest captains, not to disturb you in your march till you would outspan in view of my mountain.

“Before I began to strike, I wanted to ascertain what were the true intentions and power of the Boers. While they were forming their laager at Thaba Bosigo, I said within myself, ‘I am a dog, and if my master Boshof beats me I shall bite him.’ However, for reasons unknown to me, your commando would not come to a fight, and after a short visit the laager broke up and made for Bloemfontein.

“Tell Mr. Pretorius, if you please, that I am

always his friend, but that his mediation is useless. Mediation has for its object to part two adversaries who are fighting against each other. Tell him that I did not yet fight you, but that you alone were fighting. I did not mean to resist till you would attack me at Thaba Bosigo, and what evidently shows that I never did act on the offensive is the fact of my not having fallen on the laager when it was disbanded and trekking away from Thaba Bosigo. We must both thank Pretorius for his good wishes, but I must tell you that I have got confidence enough in your own government, without requiring the mediation of a foreign power. *I will receive your Deputation.*

“ Oh ! my good chief Boshof, call in the captains of your late commando, and rebuke them much, for they have done you much harm in their march through my country.

“ You style yourself a Christian in your last letter to me. I knew long since that you were a Christian, but the captains of your warriors are not, for if you persisted in saying that they also are Christians, we would immediately conclude that there is no God. What ! does their Christianity consist in destroying Christianity ?

“ Have not your warriors destroyed the splendid station of Zevenfontein ? Did they not also burn the missionary house at Morija ? Did they not take the whole of the Rev. Mr. Arbousset's furniture, along with a new wagon of his ? Aye, and you stripped as well Mr. Maeder, the assistant missionary of Morija, and dreadfully damaged the large churches,

which had been erected at great expense on that very station.

“When you came to Thaba Bosigo you fired more than ten cannon-shots at the mission premises, but the Lord did not allow you to touch them. No, my good Chief, the captains of your commando are no Christians, for I shall never believe that Christianity consists in carrying away women and children into captivity, in shooting down old and sick people; and all this has been done by your children. I repeat it again, you ought to rebuke them publicly, and even chastise them, because they have made so little of your Honour, who is their father.

“When I was at war with Sikonyela, I gave orders to my people not to destroy that chief’s church, and they did not touch it; and at the time the Bastards joined Major Warden, who was marching against me, I sent one of the principal men of the tribe to protect the church of the rebellious Bastards of Platberg, and consequently no damage was inflicted on those two houses of worship. What shall the world say when it hears that the children of a Christian chief have destroyed and ruined churches, whereas the children of a heathen chief were afraid to meddle with the house of God?

“Your warriors deserve another great reprimand. Of course I must believe what you tell me, namely, that the burghers have consented to retire into the Free State for a while, on account of Pretorius’s mediation. The very fact of their returning home with such motives was, or at least ought to have been, a commencement of peace. Why then did they burn

deserted villages on the road, and also the grass of the fields? And unless a plausible explanation is given of such a conduct how could we ever believe that the peace of the Boers is or ever will be sincere? My policy in this war was to see first, and consider. The Boers had been unanimous in saying that the present war was to last till one of the two nations was rooted out of the face of the earth, and because I do not wish to do anything that would be blamed by the British Government, I allowed the Boers to try the intended extermination by all the means they liked to choose. Could the English ever blame me, who am yet a barbarian and a heathen, for following the example of a civilized and Christian nation? And now, if my heart could allow me to copy your children, I would be justified in carrying women and children into captivity, in killing old and sick people, and in sending into eternity all the blind people that I could find in the Free State. I would also be justified in burning all the towns where yourself and your captains reside, but this, if I did it, would be too great a calamity, as there are great merchants in Bloemfontein, Fauresmith, Smithfield and Winburg; but, however, who could find fault with me even if I did all that? It is the custom in our country that when the people of a town go to dance in another town, the compliment is returned by the people of the visited town to the town of the visitors, and agreeably to this usage, we were going to invade the Free State in every direction, and to burn everything before us. But the Lord has inspired to you that it was good to prevent us from rendering evil for evil.

“As the winter is drawing near, I wish that your Deputation would soon come, because in case we could not agree, we must go on with the war, for the sooner we fight the better for all parties, in order that after the great battle is over we may retire into some winter quarters. We have got several reasons for wishing a fight. 1st: We never yet acted on the offensive. 2nd: You have destroyed our corn in several districts of the Lesuto, and because the people of those districts shall be hungry during the winter, we should like to look for some food in the Free State. 3rd: The reports of your commanders and correspondents which are published in the *Friend* [newspaper] are wonderful inventions, and therefore they are utterly false.

“However, some burghers of the Free State might take them to be faithful and trustworthy statements, and taking for granted that we have been greatly and easily defeated, they might in the succeeding years be inclined to incite wars against us, perhaps for very specious reasons. Moreover those statements have hurt the feelings of our warriors, whom I had a great trouble to keep within bounds during the present struggle.

“The English know that we are no cowards, and we would like the Boers to learn that we know how to fight for our rights; now, you say we are great cowards. Although I wish for peace, it might perhaps be better that we should fight once or twice on both sides, in order to get better acquainted with each other, and then perhaps peace would be a little more sincere on the part of the Boers.

“However, my name is Moshesh, and my sister is

called 'Peace.' I never liked war in my youth, how could I like it now I am old? But I lament your having so loudly spoken before the war began of all the great calamities you were going to inflict upon our nation, and what I regret more is that your conduct has clearly shown the true existence of these wicked intentions.

"I have already advised several of my captains of what is going on, and my wish is that we should both pray to God that an amicable settlement may be the result of our present correspondence. I will send one of my sons to meet your Deputation at Thaba Nchu, and I have given instructions in order that they may not be molested or insulted on the road. Such are, my good friend and chief, the true words of your true and humble servant,

"Mark X of Moshesh."

If President Boshoff felt the satire in almost every sentence of that letter he was evidently relieved that it meant to all appearances a truce. He therefore in a letter of May 18th, addressed to Moshesh as "My good friend," acknowledged it, merely expressing doubt if a full reply to the charges and statements, several being foreign to him, would serve any useful purpose. His real view of it however was wrapped up in a poignant letter written by him to Mr. Burnet, the Resident Magistrate of Aliwal North, and one of Sir George Grey's deputy commissioners appointed to arrange the pre-arbitration Armistice.



*Letter from the* PRESIDENT OF THE ORANGE FREE  
STATE *to the* RESIDENT MAGISTRATE OF  
ALIWAL NORTH

BLOEMFONTEIN,  
"20th May, 1858.

"MY DEAR SIR,

"I was on the point of writing to you officially, at the recommendation of Sir George Grey, requesting you to come over to us and take upon you the mission to the great black Prince Moshesh, for the purpose of arranging a suspension of hostilities, when I received a long epistle from the old gentleman, which I am going to publish, that our friends may grin and our enemies smile to see how he belabours us. However he is inclined to receive a Deputation from this, and as I do not know yet whether he will accept of Sir G. Grey's mediation I have determined to send two men from here on Monday next, the 24th instant. The Boers, by their unaccountable sudden break up, have brought me in such a fix as I never yet was in all my life.

"They imagine that they have given Moshesh such a licking that he will keep quiet for many a day, poor fools. Pretorius is about Winburg. I am going there to-morrow to meet him, and see what is to be done; perhaps he will receive power and authority from the 'publiek' to dismiss me, or come over here with the sitting of the Raad on the 7th June, to claim the country again. All will be alike welcome to me. After the conduct of our Boers in this war I shall be indifferent though I pity the State,—the English ought never to have given it up.

"Yours very truly,

"(Signed) J. BOSHOFF."

It is not likely for obvious reasons that the above letter was ever intended for publication. But, it is one of the published records and valuable as containing probably a genuine set of home truths. Fresh from writing it, the President drew up the same evening Instructions for the guidance of his Deputation to Thaba Bosigo, Messrs. L. J. Papenfus and W. G. Every. Those Instructions were based upon the presumption that the Basuto would agree to a suspension of hostilities with a view to a final peace settlement. In that case it was proposed that :—

1. The Orange Free State and Moshesh should each appoint Commissioners to meet and discuss articles of peace ; no person to be on such Commission who had made himself obnoxious to either party.

2. Should Moshesh formally agree to the arbitration and decision of Sir George Grey and give him full power to institute inquiries as to existing differences the Free State Volksraad would be moved to do the same.

3. In that case a truce should be faithfully observed by both parties, and no natives or coloured persons (*i.e.* Korannas and Bastards) who had aided the Boers should in the interval be molested.

4. Until the conclusion of peace, all intercourse other than by official messengers, not exceeding four at any one time, should cease ; any emissaries not accredited to be treated as spies or thieves and imprisoned, or shot if resisting.

Meanwhile the High Commissioner in despatches of May 20th and 27th, to the Secretary of State (now

Lord Stanley), recapitulated all that had happened and the conditions under which he was proceeding to act as mediator. He took exception to the action of President Boshoff in not more unreservedly stating the nature of the correspondence, now come to light, that had passed between the Free State and the South African Republic ; had he known as much at the time he would have hesitated to make the offer of mediation ; as it was, it would be necessary, he said, for him to proceed cautiously as Pretorius was at Winburg with an armed force and there existed a possibility that new complications might preclude his acting in the manner desired ; moreover, President Boshoff was anxious for him to go beyond the consideration of claims on both sides and to investigate the causes of war.

The answer from Basutoland to the High Commissioner's offer of mediation on May 6th (delayed in transmission) was contained in three letters from Moshesh of May 28th, May 29th and one undated, descriptive of past history and assenting to arbitration. Interesting and forceful as they are in some respects, their purport will be more clear if compressed into one extract avoiding repetitions of each other.

*From* CHIEF MOSHESH *to the* HIGH  
COMMISSIONER

“ GREAT CHIEF,

“ I have lately received your communication of the 6th May which must have suffered delay on its way to me ; and I have been pleased . . . with your

desire to reconcile us with Mr. Boshoff. I trust you still remember how I begged that favour of you more than a year ago. I acquainted you then that the Boers were meditating to fight against me, under pretence. Such has been the case.

“To-day, you, the Servant of the Queen, offer your mediation. I do not hesitate accepting it . . . with confidence. I have lived amidst wars, and found wars to be great evils—peace a pleasurable thing; and surely my letter must have fallen into your hands—that letter of mine to Boshoff in which I desired him to refer our case to Your Excellency, before we had fought at all.

“I am still in the same sentiments, hoping that all may be well arranged when you put your hands therein and inquire fairly into this contest, and convince yourself that I have not ever acted on the offensive as yet; for your letter reached me just as I had decided on going down at once into the Free State; but your word prevented it. Now I learn that a ship loaded with cannons and guns and powder and lead has arrived: that those ammunitions are on their way to the Free State. My people question whether the truce and mediation for peace asked by Mr. Boshoff to yourself and to me also are not a snare. . . .

“I have ever been desirous to follow the advice of the British Government, and I do so still, relying on . . . your generosity; for my heart is grieved, seeing that the Boers have cut an ugly pattern for my tribe, under the eyes of my warriors whom I was struggling hard at the very time to restrain. Still, at last some of them were detached from the others and went on

to create a diversion, and they burned houses in their turn. . . .

“Now, my Lord, if you can help us in making peace, let affairs be properly investigated and that peace well guaranteed ; also let my teachers and their churches be secured from the rough hands of the Boers, for my fighting men are very wroth at being denied the liberty to go and avenge themselves of the destruction of Beersheba, which had no fault. . . . But the Boers have plundered and burned down, and left but little standing, though they knew that the law of retaliation is at the bottom of our manners. . . .

“Their behaviour makes us wonder at them, although they may give a compensation when matters are arranged ; and at our being deprived of powder and lead we wonder also, knowing not what for, since the Queen of England has made no law by which they can be refused to us and not to our neighbours. . . .

“I feel thankful that the Colony allows us to procure all European produces . . . with the exception of ammunition only ; but should this only pass on to us when peace is concluded, my heart will be truly white. It will be further cheered . . . if the Free State engages to make no slaves in my land and if some guarantee can be given against encroachment on their part upon the boundary line to be traced. . . .

“Last year I wrote to Your Excellency . . . of the difficulties that the boundary question was likely to bring about . . . but my enemies wanted war and

they made appeal to the cannon. . . . This war was not the work of my hands. I have been attacked at a moment when I was most peaceful and . . . I have kept my people within bounds as much as possible. . . .

“I hope you will suspend your judgment about the war till I find an opportunity of telling you the truth. Long before your letter came to hand President Boshoff had sued for peace and I had promised to receive a Deputation which he had proposed to send to me. I expect every moment that Deputation. . . . Boshoff has much grieved me . . . by bringing war into our country and because we are not conscious of having deserved such a calamity. We were going to invade the Free State when Boshoff wrote to me about peace. . . . We stand still, and if the Free State will give us satisfaction we shall not carry on war any further. One thing which has afflicted us . . . is that the Boers have interfered with our Churches and Missionaries. If the God of the Blacks is not the same as the God of the Whites, why do all Christian Nations send Missionaries to us? . . .

“I, Moshesh, have been an unfortunate man all through. I allowed the Boers to occupy party of my country. . . . How have they repaid me? . . . There is a snake called Lebulubulu which dies in giving birth, because its little ones rend its bosom. In like manner the Boers whom I had received into my bosom thought they could not live without killing me. . . . There are some of your subjects in Cape Colony who make very little of your orders and laws. You say, ‘Let Moshesh live’; they say, ‘No, let

Moshesh die.' If they loved me as you do they would not supply Boshoff with so much powder and lead. Why is it that nobody supplies me?

“. . . About 16 years ago one of the governors marked down my limits on a treaty. I was to be ruler within those limits. A short time after another governor came. It was Sir P. Maitland. The Boers then began to talk of *their rights* to places I had lent them. Maitland told me those people were subjects of the Queen and should be kept under proper control: he did not tell me he recognized any right they had to land in my country: but as it was difficult to take them away it was proposed . . . they should live in that part near the meeting of the Orange and Caledon rivers.

“Then came Sir Harry Smith and he told me . . . he would see justice done to all but in order to do so he would make the Queen's Laws extend over every white man. . . . I could not understand what he would do. I thought it would be something very just. . . . But instead of this I now heard that the Boers consider all those farms as their own . . . and driving out by one means or another my own people.

“In vain I remonstrated. Sir Harry Smith had sent Warden to govern in the Sovereignty. He listened to the Boers. . . . I was at that time in trouble, for Sikonyela and the Korannas were tormenting me; . . . they said openly the Major gave them orders to do so, and I have proof he did so. One day he sent me a map and said, Sign that, and I will tell those people to leave off fighting; if you do not sign the map, I cannot help you. . . . I was

told if I did not sign the map, it would be the beginning of a great war. I signed, but soon after I sent my cry to the Queen and begged her to remove the line. . . . I thought justice would soon be done and Warden put to rights. The quarrels between Sikonyela, Moroko, the Korannas and my people did not cease; Warden took part with my enemies; then Basutos took cattle and horses from Boers. I tried to stop this but Major Warden gathered an army and fought against me; he did us no harm but he made my people angry and more difficult for me to govern.

“Then the Queen sent two gentlemen [Hogge and Owen] in 1850 . . . and I expected justice would be done. I was told the Warden line was unfair and would be changed: then Sir George Cathcart carried war in 1851 into my country and told me he left in peace with me.

“Five years since Sir George Clerk came to arrange every dispute. He declared to me . . . I was to understand that all limits hitherto spoken of were withdrawn. . . .

“On the Government being withdrawn, it was natural for me to suppose that the grants *I had made to it* were cancelled, for the conditions on which they were made could no longer be fulfilled by the British Government. I told my people the British Resident had taken away the limit and would cast it in the Orange River. I did not, and do not, consider it existing after Sir George Clerk retired. Things went on quietly for a time but . . . I heard of hostile plans being laid to oblige us to yield. I then wrote to



Your Excellency to come forward and assist us in this vexing question. My prayer to you was not answered. . . . Seeing the Boers determined to encroach . . . my people became restless and some took advantage of the angry feeling to carry off cattle and horses. This system I did not approve ; when therefore lists were sent to me of stolen property I ordered a collection to be made equivalent to the property said to have been lost and the fine imposed upon us in consequence.

“The Boers were not satisfied with this. . . . Out of a large number of cattle I sent them, they took off as many as they liked and returned me the remainder, ordering horses to be sent instead. I had fully understood that the question of the cattle was a pretext for a quarrel. . . .

“I tried my utmost to avert war . . . we were at peace for a time. In the commencement of 1858 my people living near farmers received orders to remove. . . . This again caused the fire to burn. . . . War was commenced by the Boers in massacring my people of Beersheba and ruining that station, against the people of which there was not a complaint ever brought forward. . . . I ordered my people then all to retreat towards my residence and let the fury of the Boers be spent upon an empty land ; unfortunately some skirmishes took place ; some Boers were killed, some of my people also. . . . But I will speak of many Basuto who were taken prisoners by the Whites and then killed, most cruelly. If you require me to bring forward these cases I will do so. . . . On coming to my mountain the Boers found I was pre-

pared to check their progress and they consequently retired. My intention was then to have followed them up and show them that my people could also carry on offensive, believing that having once experienced the horrors of war in their midst, I should not so soon be troubled by them again. My bands were getting ready to make a descent, when the Boers thought proper to make request for cessation of hostilities. I knew what misery I should bring on the country by leaving the Basutos to ravage and therefore I have agreed to the proposal. . . . If they have remained quiet it has been owing to my persuasion and promises that they might have good hope of justice, Your Excellency having consented to act as arbitrator. . . .

“Mark X of Moshesh.”

The Free State Deputation were received at Thaba Bosigo with every mark of respect and returned on June 5, with an Agreement signed by Moshesh for an Armistice pending a final decision upon the points at issue between the two territories. It was laid before the Volksraad and ratified together with the proposition to accept arbitration.

The High Commissioner now appeared to hold a strong position. President Boshoff had apologized in a letter of June 10 for his questionable correspondence with the South African Republic; the Secretary of State (now Sir E. B. Lytton) had warmly approved of his mediation which both parties to the dispute had accepted with confidence and had laid down arms at his desire. In reporting this to the Imperial Govern-

KETANE RIVER GORGE.





ment and stating his readiness to embark on the task of endeavouring to restore peace in the distracted country formerly known as the Sovereignty, Sir George Grey made the following prophetic observations which all proved correct :—

“The Kaffir tribes upon our borders are already becoming disturbed. If the Basutos are conquerors in the war it will greatly encourage the coloured races against the whites, and as they will be dissatisfied with our assumed neutrality, under the guise of which we have continued to supply the Orange Free State with arms and ammunition, whilst we have acted as a police to prevent the Basutos from obtaining such supplies, I fear they will regard themselves as justified in pillaging and assailing us. If the Basutos are conquered, I think that we shall be regarded as the real cause of their having been vanquished. . . . I fear the course our Treaties have compelled us to pursue will not gain us the gratitude or respect of either party. . . .

“I still believe that nothing but a strong Federal Government which unites within itself all the European races in South Africa can permanently maintain peace in this country, and free Great Britain from constant anxiety for the peace of her possessions here.”

Although the outlook appeared somewhat brighter, the restlessness and excitement of war could not subside all at once. There were no telegraphs in those days and postal arrangements were of the most primitive order, so that it was always a long and difficult process

to acquaint the public with what was going on. Some of the lawless people continued therefore to agitate and raid : on the Basuto side particularly, Poshudi who, as related on March 28th, had been driven away from his lands, his villages burned and sacked ; on the other side, Jan Letelle who had aided the Boers and was now found by them to be a most troublesome ally. As nearly as possible these two individuals succeeded in disturbing the Armistice. However, towards the end of July the High Commissioner was able to call upon the parties to lodge with him the precise claims they desired to advance.

The Free State appointed a Commission to bring up as evidence a mass of depositions sworn to by farmers designed to prove thefts, incursions and violations of boundaries and to establish the fact that, when the Emigrants first appeared, the land was unoccupied and the Basuto as a nation were unknown. Their main claims were : a ratification of the Warden boundary of 1849 ; compensation for thefts and war expenses. The claims of Basutoland were set forth in another long reiterative statement by Moshesh of July 31, summed up in the words :—

“ I earnestly pray the British Government to restore unto his legitimate owner the country which was in my possession before the arrival of the whites. In that question we cannot acknowledge another government but that of English, at request of which tracts of land have been granted. When the British Government withdrew his protections, the land should have been restored unto his legitimate sovereign.”

Late in August 1858 Sir George Grey reached Bloemfontein. Having discussed matters with the President he rode to Basutoland to consult personally with Moshesh and his sons upon certain points which would if agreed upon clear the course of business. It was then arranged that the questions at issue should be thoroughly thrashed out at a General Conference on September 15. The Governor suggested as most convenient to himself Aliwal North but gave way good-naturedly to the protestations of Moshesh that Beersheba in the disputed territory might be the rendezvous. Being then much harassed on account of serious unrest amongst the natives in Kaffraria and also deeply concerned to arrange for the despatch of all available troops from the Cape to quell the Mutiny in India, he hurriedly travelled to King William's Town, remained a short time and then returned to Beersheba—a distance of 450 miles on horseback—arriving there according to appointment on September 14.

On September 15 the Free State representatives were in attendance for the Conference ; but Moshesh failed to appear. It was but a short distance for him to go and the concession to meet there was made entirely at his behest. He seems to have gathered an impression beforehand that the boundary question would go against him and fancied as he had often done before that a settlement would be less binding if announced in his absence. He therefore excused himself on the ground of ill-health and sent men to represent him neither of rank nor position. He was influenced by the dread of being cornered into

accepting a decision with which he disagreed, under pressure from Sir George Grey for whom he held profound respect. He allowed himself to be swayed by his militant sons who were averse to any concessions and resolved to keep their father from temptation.

On this occasion Moshesh stands out in the worst light. He had a good case and a commanding position in the eyes of the Governor and of the Free State. He might have gained by his presence a great deal that he wanted, and above all have advanced to a stage of some finality in the grievous disputes which at heart he wanted settled. But his strength of character at that moment failed him and it must be written off against him as an act of gross disrespect and weakness which marked the turning point in his career. His apologists have endeavoured to shield him under the excuses that he had seen so many Governors and Proclamations, had been the subject of so many unfulfilled threats and promises, and his untutored mind was so cumbered and confused with all the issues presented to him that he surrendered to the inflammatory appeals of his children, who were firm in the assurance of winning back lost territory by an attitude of defiant indifference to all boundary proposals. The Chief cannot however be absolved from condemnation for having, after so strongly court-ing mediation and deluding the Governor into the belief that his decision would be binding, thrown him over with such abrupt coarseness. By so doing, his prestige and the interests of his tribe alike suffered.



But, Sir George Grey was much too earnest to be deterred lightly from the task he had sincerely undertaken. After exhausting by means of messengers the resources of friendly reasoning which led to nothing he wrote Moshesh a reproachful letter, scarcely expressive of the irritation he was labouring under (extract) :—

*“September 20, 1858.*

“GREAT CHIEF MOSHESH,

“ . . . To the meeting you sent not your sons or principal chiefs but a set of messengers who, under the circumstances, it was in your absence a public affront to send to me. That this was well known to your people was shown by the disrespectful remarks some of them made. . . . I wish now to say no more on the subject. I should have acted differently after what has taken place had I been acting for myself, but I now act on behalf of other persons.

“I recently did my utmost to show my warm personal interest in your people, and my friendly disposition to yourself. I now appear in a simple official capacity to try to make arrangements for peace between yourself and the Orange Free State, and this I shall exert myself to do with a view solely to the public interests of the country, notwithstanding what has taken place.

“(Signed) GEORGE GREY.”

It was a loftily inspired letter ; but it brought no reply from the Chief other than repeated requests that the Governor would visit him in Basutoland. Had

Sir George Grey put his foot down more firmly it is most probable that the Basuto attitude would have weakened, for they knew it was an outrageous request on their part for the Queen's representative to abdicate his prerogative ; but he was intensely anxious for peace and, full of the kindness of heart which distinguished him, he crossed into Basutoland to meet Moshesh at Morija. A discussion there followed with the result that it was found hopeless to reconcile the conflicting land claims of the Free State and the Basuto ; these claims overlapped badly and neither side would concede or compromise. Nevertheless, the Governor gained information and departed for Aliwal North, arriving there on September 25, accompanied by ambassadors from Basutoland, viz. Makwai, a cousin, of higher rank than Moshesh ; Job, a half-brother ; David Raliye, a nephew of Molitsane.

The position in which Sir George Grey found himself was depressing. He had struggled hard to get the disputants to argue their case in open court before him in a fair and honest manner. The Free State had responded but Moshesh had not. He had a voluminous catalogue of grievances before him ; yet they were all *ex parte*, and when sifted came to nothing upon which as arbitrator he felt at liberty to deliver judgment based upon ascertained facts or upon law. The utmost he could attempt was to give a decision dictated at his own discretion in the hope that it would be loyally accepted by both sides, for there was no power to enforce it. It was not his fault if his award was founded on imperfect data, because Moshesh,

though persistently disputing the Free State contention that the Warden line was confirmed by the Convention of 1854, made no proper effort to establish that plea.

The award of Sir George Grey, who was mindful of instructions from the Imperial Government on no account to involve Great Britain, was for the above reasons not an ideal settlement. It took the form of a Treaty of Peace to which, at his instigation, the representatives of the Free State and Basutoland subscribed their names in his presence.

As an historic document of abiding interest it is given in full :—

TREATY OF PEACE ENTERED INTO BETWEEN THE  
ORANGE FREE STATE AND THE BASUTO CHIEF  
MOSHESH

With the view of bringing to a close the war prevailing between the Orange Free State and the Basuto Nation, and the establishment of a lasting peace and amity between the two contracting parties,—the after-mentioned articles have, through the mediation of His Excellency Sir George Grey, K.C.B., Governor of the Colony of the Cape of Good Hope, and High Commissioner, &c., &c., been agreed upon between them, which shall be binding to the said State and the Basuto Chief Moshesh and his successors for the time to come.

*Article I.*—The boundary line between the districts of Harrismith, Winburg, Bloemfontein and Caledon River, down to Jammerberg Drift and Basutoland, is

recognized to be that as defined by the late British Resident, Major Warden. From Jammerberg Drift the line shall run down the centre of the Caledon River to the junction of that river with the Wilgebosch or Wilgeboom Spruit, from thence straight to the centre of the summit of Elandsberg; thence to the centre of the summit of Koesberg; thence along the summit of that mountain to its western extremity; thence straight to the centre of the summit of Mount Matlaheng or Aasvogelberg; thence to Hartebeest hoek,—leaving that farm in the Free State Territory; thence straight to the centre of Mount Maypati or Hanglip; thence straight towards the Wesleyan Missionary Station, on the Wittebergen Native Reserve, to where such straight line cuts the Orange River.

*Article II.*—The above-named boundary line shall be marked out by His Excellency the Governor of the Colony of the Cape of Good Hope, or by a Commissioner or Commissioners to be appointed by His Excellency, and the decision of His Excellency, or of such Commissioner or Commissioners, upon all matters in dispute, between the said parties, in respect of the said line, shall be final.

*Article III.*—All subjects of the Chief Moshesh, with the exceptions after-mentioned in the Article relating to the mission station of Beersheba, shall withdraw from the Free State side of the line, without compensation, and all subjects of the Free State shall withdraw from the Basuto side of the line, without compensation,—but ample time shall be allowed them to remove their crops and buildings.

*Article IV.*—The Chief Moshesh, in yielding as above stated all right of property in the tract of country called Beersheba mission station to the Orange Free State, stipulates that 6,000 acres of land immediately surrounding the mission station, the boundaries of which land shall be defined by the Commissioner or Commissioners appointed by the Governor of the Colony of the Cape of Good Hope, shall continue to be held by the French Mission, in trust for missionary purposes, with full power, if they see fit so to do, to dispose of the same to any purchaser or purchasers, in order that if the missionaries and Basuto inhabitants of the station choose to retire therefrom, the funds realized from the sale of these lands may be applied by the French Mission for the establishment of a new station or stations, for the benefit, in the first instance, of the Basuto inhabitants who may remove from Beersheba, or for other missionary purposes connected with the Basuto nation ; but the right of sovereignty of the 6,000 acres of land reserved, as above said, for the French Mission, is declared to be vested in the Orange Free State.

*Article V.*—A public road, with convenient outspans, shall be reserved from Hebron to Aliwal North, for the use of all persons travelling between the Basuto territory and the Colony of the Cape of Good Hope, but which road and outspans shall be the property, and under the jurisdiction and laws of, the Orange Free State.

*Article VI.*—Any Basuto criminals, who, having committed crimes in their own country, may fly to the Free State, shall, on demand being made, be delivered

up to Moshesh ; and all criminals who may fly from the Orange Free State into the Basuto territory shall, upon demand being made to Moshesh, be delivered up to the authorities of the Free State.

*Article VII.*—Whenever stolen cattle or horses shall be discovered within the territory of any chief under the paramountcy of Moshesh, such chief shall restore such stolen cattle or horses to the owner thereof, and he shall be bound to do his utmost to capture and deliver out the thieves, and to compel them to pay further compensation equal to the value of the cattle or horses they may have stolen.

*Article VIII.*—Cattle or horse stealers shall be dealt with according to the laws of the country in which they may be tried.

*Article IX.*—Whenever the spoor of stolen cattle or horses is traced to the territory of any chief under the paramountcy of Moshesh, such chief shall be bound to cause his people to aid in tracing the said spoor until the stolen cattle or horses are discovered in his territory, or until the spoor of the same is lost, or traced into the territory of some other chief, which last chief shall be bound to cause his people in like manner to aid in tracing the spoor, until the stolen cattle or horses are discovered, or traced into the territory of some other chief aforesaid. If the people of any chief into whose territory spoor of stolen cattle or horses has been traced, cannot carry the spoor out of his territory, then the chief of such territory shall be bound to pay within one month compensation equal to the value of the stolen cattle or horses to the owner thereof.

*Article X.*—The Chief Moshesh binds himself to adopt strict and decisive measures for carrying out the above regulations for the prevention and punishment of thefts, and for recovery and restitution of stolen cattle and horses.

*Article XI.*—If robberies be committed by any chiefs or their people under the paramountcy of Moshesh, and if after notice given thereof to Moshesh, together with the necessary proofs, absolute and complete compensation be not given within two months from the date of such notice, or if repeated robberies be committed by the people of any such chief, and the necessary proofs of the same be given to Moshesh, or if any of his chiefs, with their people, make incursions with armed bands into the Free State, or commit acts of hostility against the said State, then Moshesh shall either inflict a just and sufficient punishment upon the said chief and people himself, or should he be unable to do so, then and in that case the authorities of the Free State shall be at liberty to attack and punish such delinquent chief or chiefs, without Moshesh's interference, either personally or by others, or without a general war with the Basuto nation being the consequence of such acts on the part of the authorities of the Free State.

*Article XII.*—Whenever hunting parties of Moshesh's people desire to kill game in the Orange Free State, they must previously obtain permission so to do through the medium of their Chief, from the Landdrost who possesses jurisdiction over the portion of the Free State in which they purpose to hunt, and such parties shall submit to the regulations which the Government

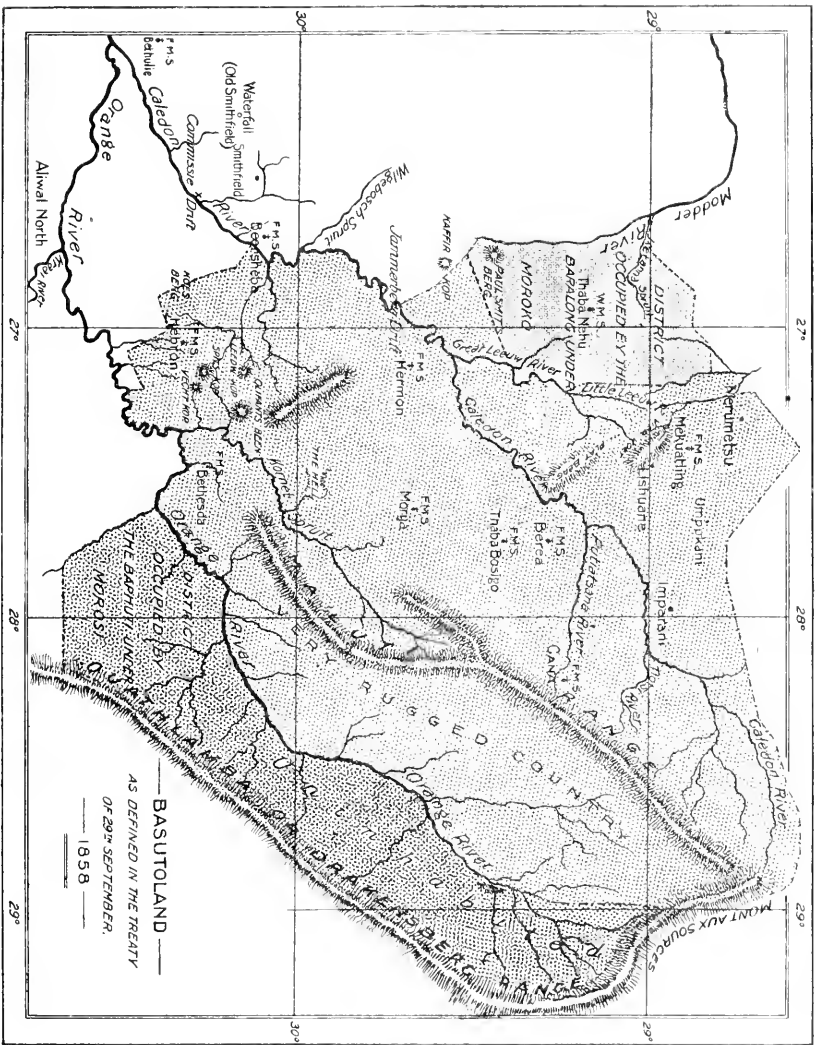
of the Free State may, from time to time, frame, for the guidance of hunting parties, a copy of which regulations, together with any alteration made therein, shall be furnished to the Chief Moshesh, for his information. Should such hunting parties go into the Free State without permission of the Landdrost previously obtained, or should they transgress the regulations framed for their guidance, and duly notified as aforesaid to the Chief Moshesh, they may, in such case, be treated as enemies, and be driven away by force.

*Article XIII.*—The Captain Jan Letelle and his people, and other coloured persons or native tribes not belonging to the Basutos, or not formerly subject to the Chief Moshesh, but who, during the late war between the Basuto nation and the Free State, may have gone over to the Free State government, or assisted that government in any way, shall not be allowed by the Chief Moshesh to suffer any damages or molestation, either in their persons or their property, and the lands they occupy upon the ground or by reason of anything they may have done in this respect.

But it is to be understood, that if the persons alluded to in this article remain within the territory of the Chief Moshesh, they must return to or come under allegiance to that Chief.

This done and signed, in the presence of His Excellency Sir George Grey, K.C.B., Governor of the Colony of the Cape of Good Hope, High Commissioner, etc., etc., at Aliwal North, in the Colony of the Cape of Good Hope, this 29th day of September,





— BASUTOLAND —  
 AS DEFINED IN THE TREATY  
 OF 29th SEPTEMBER,  
 1858



in the year of our Lord One Thousand and Eight Hundred and fifty-eight.

On behalf of the O.F.S. (signed) H. A. L. HAMELBERG  
and 8 others.

On behalf of Moshesh : MAQUAI X his mark  
and 2 others.

Seal and X of Moshesh.

Confirmed at Thaba Bosigo  
the 15th day of October 1858.

By the hands of the representatives from Basutoland Sir George Grey sent this Treaty for signature with a kindly letter to Moshesh expressing the hope that it would be satisfactory to him and would lead to the much desired tranquillity ; it had only been effected by give and take on both sides which his representatives who had been fully consulted would explain. It was in fact, he said, a Treaty which, from the consolidation of the respective territories and from its removing sources of future disputes, was alike advantageous to both parties.

But Sir George Grey was not content if he could help it to let his mediation be void, as other attempts had proved, for want of a careful delimitation of those parts where the boundary ceased to possess strong physical features, that is, the disputed portion in the open country lying between the Caledon and Orange Rivers. He therefore undertook a toilsome journey from Aliwal North to the frontier and personally surveyed the line, particulars of which were committed to a memorandum signed by himself and mapped ; twelve prominent beacons were erected ; bearings were

taken by prismatic compass and the distances between carefully computed.

This written description and map were communicated to the Free State Government by letter :—

*From* HIGH COMMISSIONER *to* CHAIRMAN O.F.  
STATE COMMISSION

“ SIR,

“ ALIWAL NORTH, 8 *October* 1858.

“ I have now the honour to enclose a written description and a rough sketch of the Boundary Line between the Orange Free State and Basutoland.

“ The whole line has been pointed out to the Field Cornets and Natives, and the points along it are either so remarkable or so well marked with beacons that there can be no difficulty in identifying them.

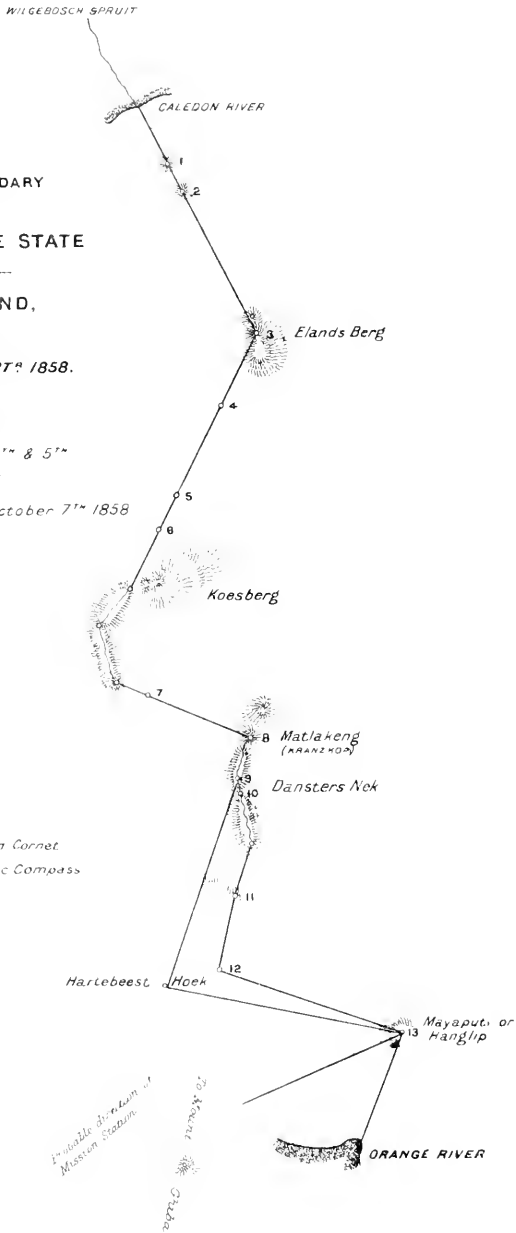
“ The red line on the sketch shows nearly the Boundary Line, as it would have run in strict accordance with the Treaty ; a considerable portion of land, as will be seen from the sketch, has been added to the Free State, in order to secure the interests of the farmers. I hoped that some corresponding advantage would have been gained for the Basutos, but this has not yet been done. I should therefore feel much obliged if you would press upon the President my earnest request that some equivalent concession should be made to the Basutos, such as by allowing them to retain the whole of the mountains of Koesberg and Matlaheng, where their interests have suffered. This could easily be done by letting the Boundary run along the base of those mountains instead of along their summits.

“ (Signed) G. GREY.”

ROUGH  
 SKETCH OF BOUNDARY  
 BETWEEN  
 THE ORANGE FREE STATE  
 AND  
 BASUTO LAND,  
 IN TERMS OF  
 TREATY OF 29<sup>TH</sup> SEPT<sup>R</sup> 1858.

MADE ON THE 1<sup>ST</sup> 2<sup>ND</sup> 4<sup>TH</sup> & 5<sup>TH</sup>  
 DAYS OF OCTOBER 1858  
 October 7<sup>TH</sup> 1858

Scale one half inch to a mile  
 No base measured  
 Distances estimated by Fela Cornet  
 Bearings taken by Prismatic Compass





The whole effort bore traces of the Governor's indefatigable labour ; it was unfortunate, however, that he left the two points referred to in the above letter to be determined by the generosity of the Free State in whose favour the survey slightly turned. His request for the concession was not complied with ; but the Basuto, to whom it was made known, took it to be an order and thereafter regarded the mountain slopes in question as available to them from the base upwards. It was just sufficient to afford excuse for keeping open the sore between the farmers and the natives, both of whom seemed destined time after time to reach the verge of a good understanding but not to achieve it.

## CHAPTER XVI

Who bravely dares, must sometimes risk a fall.

SMOLLETT.

Scares and conflicts caused by Jan Letelle: Basuto expansion to the East: Pretorius succeeds Boshoff as President of Orange Free State, and holds Conferences with Basuto: Sir George Grey mysteriously and abruptly recalled in the midst of important work: is immediately reinstated and finally retires: a retrospect: some of Moshesh's sound laws

1858—1862

ALTHOUGH the signature of Moshesh appears on the Treaty of Peace recorded in the preceding chapter it was not obtained without grave difficulty. The document was sent to him by the hand of Makwai but was mysteriously returned to Sir George Grey unsigned. Mr. Burnet was then sent by the Governor on October 12, 1858, to Thaba Bosigo in order to obtain the signature and afford any explanations. He found the Chief in a most refractory mood refusing absolutely to affix his seal. The chief obstacle was that part of Article I. where the boundary was said to follow the Warden line. It was unfortunate that the expression was used because as a matter of fact the





Photo by T. Lindsay Fairclough.  
MUSHROOM ROCK, FOBANE NEK, LERIBE,  
p. 276]



Photo by T. Lindsay Fairclough.  
BALANCED BOULDER, NEAR SEKUBU, LERIBE.



Warden line was only confirmed in so far as related to the northern portion ; thereafter the boundary followed the Caledon River *via* Jammerberg to Beersheba. But the expression deceived many others besides Moshesh who could not clear his head of the idea that it meant the whole Warden line. He was also reluctant to agree to the stipulations about thieving and hunting for game, alleging that to sign a paper pledging himself to stop thieving, which must always go on, or to stop hunting game which God had sent to his people for food, was like signing a Great Lie. He also fenced bitterly about the inclusion in Free State territory of the Beersheba Mission farm which had been his original gift to the French missionaries. However, after detaining Mr. Burnet several days and much vacillation he signed it, declaring that he did so out of necessity and respect for Sir George Grey and not because his heart was in it.

The Treaty and boundary had the merit of being condemned by both parties for what it took away from each and gave to the other. In no way could topographical requirements have been easily satisfied. The Free State President in addressing his Volksraad on November 22, 1858, voiced the opinion of its members when he stated that the advantages of the arbitration lay wholly on the side of the Basuto ; he affirmed his own in saying that the sacrifices in respect of land and otherwise which the burghers were called upon to make were unavoidable in the restoration of peace. No doubt Moshesh endeavoured to appease his people in a similar way but we have no records of his parliament. Both he and the President recognized in

communications afterwards published the forbearance and patience of Sir George Grey who was entitled to the gratitude and esteem of all.

It cannot be doubted that, taking all circumstances into consideration and comparing the new sketch-map with those of Sir Harry Smith and others, Sir George Grey accorded to the Basuto equitable treatment and a larger tract of land than they would ever have expected unless, as happened, they were successful in arms against the Boers. It was the fact of their having so succeeded, and failed in their full demands, that caused discontent amongst them and disposed the unruly section to trample on the Treaty directly the Governor's back was turned. There is no evidence that Moshesh lent himself to such tactics; others did so and he was blamed. On the contrary, he sent just at that moment three of his sons to follow up and kill if necessary a notorious thief belonging to Poshudi. They caught the thief red-handed, put him to death in Poshudi's presence, and restored the stolen property to the Boer owner. On many occasions drastic measures of this sort are known to have been taken by the Chief but were unnoted.

President Boshoff in his speech to the Volksraad lamented that the hopes of permanent peace were shaken, for the Basutos or some of them, especially Poshudi and Molitsane, had not ceased since the day the truce was signed by robberies and wanton acts to impoverish the country and make it unsafe for the frontier burghers to return to their devastated farms. But, at a later session in February 1859, he felt bound to admit activity on part of the Basuto chiefs, especially

by Molapo on the northern side, in maintaining good relations so that the farmers there were able to occupy their lands in safety and peace.

One of Sir George Grey's excellent designs for preserving peace after his arbitration was to remove from the centre of late disorders some of those restless spirits who had done so much to promote them, viz. Poshudi, Lehana the son of Sikonyela, and Jan Letelle. The first-named would not budge. The other two accepted a provisional offer he made them to settle below the Drakensberg near the Umzimvubu River, bordering Pondoland and Natal, and were allowed to inspect the proposed ground under guidance of Mr. John Austen, the magistrate of Herschel. They were so pleased with the new country that Lehana returned and prepared for migration which was carried out some months later in spite of a refusal by the officer acting as Governor of the Cape, in the absence of Sir George Grey who had been suddenly recalled, to endorse the arrangements of his predecessor. This defeated Sir George Grey's plans, for Jan Letelle, unable to remove at that moment, was hung up between the offer and refusal and remained for some years longer in the danger zone as a scourge to all the neighbours white and black. So great a robber was he that Moshesh positively refused at that time to consider Free State claims for the restoration of stolen stock on the ground that his thefts from Basutoland exceeded those committed by the Basuto in the Free State.

In the negotiations for his removal the following curious letter passed from him to Sir George Grey, through Mr. Austen :—

“Koesberg,

“22nd May, 1859.

“I write to you, my Lord and Father, Sir George Grey, K.C.B., Governor.

“I, John Letelle, I hope still upon your word that you have said to me, my Lord, at Blesbok Fontein, the place of Hans van Rooyen. Your word was to assist me with wagons if I move, and when I arrived there, with powder and lead.

“Upon your word, my Lord, and also with utensils [gereeds chap] and also with a plough. My father, I trust in your word, my Lord, Sir George Grey, and I hope you will take as good care of me as of Adam Kok. And, my Lord, the country is to my taste, Lord and father, and I hope to go as soon as possible. My father, the children wish still to plant if possible, and I hope in two years that I and Sikonyela's son shall have good means of living, for we have for a long time had no rest, but I hope that our God may go with us, and Mr. Austen as you write. I hope that my father prays for us, because we go as the children of Israel in the wilderness, you also I. Oh be then as a friend and father, and I hope that where I have not done right, you will write me what is right.

“To the Lord Sir George Grey, with my best compliments, and my compliments to you J. Austen.

“I remain your friend,

“(Signed) JAN LETELLE.”

Meanwhile, Moshesh received the credit of scheming to appropriate the Umzimvubu country by introducing there his son Nehemiah in command of a small colony

of Basuto. He certainly had an eye to it as will appear hereafter : but it is more likely that at the moment he rather countenanced than promoted the idea in order to let some of his restless sons who were quarrelling with each other carve their own way out ; his own hands were too full for him to seek new adventures. He would have liked to see Jan Letelle go there or anywhere so as to be rid of his mischief-making and get the ground that he occupied.

It happened that Sir George Grey was attracted by the versatility and character of Nehemiah to whom, when conversing about the Treaty of Peace at Morija, he had given a qualified consent to the Umzimvubu project. Accordingly Nehemiah with about 100 male followers established himself there in March 1859 and then requested the Governor's sanction, which was neither actually given nor refused. That part of the country was by virtue of Treaties within the sphere of British influence but under no Government control. As adherents gradually joined Nehemiah it had the effect of disturbing the native tribes on the east of the Drakensberg who estimated the greatness of Moshesh at a high value and regarded this approach of his son as the thin end of Basuto expansion. But in any case it definitely sufficed to deter Jan Letelle from planting himself in juxtaposition to one of the cubs of the lion of Basutoland and was the secondary cause of his remaining as a festering sore on the sensitive boundary line.

Political changes then occurred in the Orange Free State. Early in 1859 President Boshoff, worn out with the cares of office, resigned in favour of Mr. E. R. Snyman who in January 1860 met a deputation

from Basutoland on the border to discuss matters relating to prevailing disorders. At that meeting Moshesh made a definite proposition, as an alternative to the abortive plan of Sir George Grey, viz. that Jan Letelle and his crew of ruffians should be handed over to him with their land. He undertook to keep them in order ; but, failing that course, he would not be responsible for peace and would have to trespass in the Free State in punishing law-breakers. As the proposal was rejected, robberies and reprisals continued freely. Then in February 1860 the Presidentship of the Free State was in response to a largely signed requisition assumed by Marthinus Wessels Pretorius, at that time President of the Transvaal Republic.

One of the first acts of Pretorius was to hold a Conference with the Basuto. It took place near Winburg on April 30, 1860, when, after a carousal, peace was ratified anew and something akin to a mock Treaty entered into. In reporting the affair to the High Commissioner Pretorius claimed in pretentious language that he had surmounted the difficulties his predecessors had failed in, viz. in establishing peace on a more solid footing. The proceedings of the Conference as recorded at the time by an official witness were grotesque : the extracts given below tend to show what a hollow sham the whole thing was.

ACCOUNT OF A CONFERENCE BETWEEN THE PRESIDENT OF THE ORANGE FREE STATE AND THE CHIEF MOSHESH

. . . On 29th April, His Honour M. W. Pretorius, attended by his suite, and Josiah, Great Councillor and



Premier of Moshesh, arrived from the S.A. Republic at . . . Wonderkop, the appointed place of meeting ; and immediately after His Honour's arrival he was waited upon by Paulus Moperi, brother of Moshesh, and David, Tsekelo and George, Moshesh's sons, to pay their respects and inform Mr. Pretorius that Moshesh had arrived . . . for the purpose of conferring with His Honour as requested by him. In the evening Divine Service was held at Mr. Senekal's, in which the Chiefs and their attendants took part with the Boers.

On the evening of the 30th Josiah informed the President that Moshesh desired that he would select three of his sons as hostages, to be kept in the President's Camp, and requested that Messrs. Howell, Senekal and Schoeman might be sent in exchange to Moshesh. This was agreed to.

Mr. Pretorius was further informed that on his arrival near Wonderkop Moshesh would advance and meet him.

At 10 o'clock a.m. Mr. Pretorius, attended by about twenty burghers (he having declined to allow a larger number to be present), and the hostages left for Wonderkop.

At noon, near Wonderkop, Mr. Cornelius du Ploy, and one of Moshesh's sons met Mr. Pretorius and informed him that Moshesh was on the move, and that hostages would be dispensed with. Upon this Mr. Pretorius gave orders that the hostages on the part of Moshesh be allowed to return to the Basuto army.

A party of 70 mounted Basutos then made their

appearance, advanced, and drew up in a line at about 250 yards distance. Messengers then arrived to announce that Moshesh was coming. . . .

Moshesh and two of his principal men . . . then came on, and the President and Landdrost proceeded to meet him. On meeting Mr. Pretorius, the old King dismounted, and shook hands very warmly, Moshesh saying that he was glad to meet Pretorius again.

The Chiefs then proceeded to the appointed spot, and, sitting down, were immediately surrounded by the 70 Basutos before mentioned, but all unarmed. After an exchange of the usual greetings, it was agreed upon that the President's escort should also come up. . . .

The Great Chief then got upon his legs and made an oration of three hours' continuance, in which he gave the history of the Basuto country and the Boer emigration. After concluding, he was followed by several of his Chiefs in the same strain.

Mr. Pretorius then rose and said :—Great Chief, Father Moshesh, and Chiefs of the Basuto nation! You have brought with you a white flag, so have I. These flags are emblematic of peace. I have come to establish a peace, not a hollow peace, but a substantial and everlasting peace. I have come to place you Moshesh, Captains and people of the Basuto nation, in my arms, and there you shall all rest in security, lovingly (clapping of hands on the part of Moshesh and people). But I must have security and peace for my people also. Therefore, if you will have peace, you Moshesh and your Captains must assist

in maintaining it between our nations, and that can only be done by your assisting me to put down thieves. (Moshesh and Chiefs: "We will,—they must be put down.") Remember what you were not many years ago, a poor, helpless tribe: who made you what you are now? (Moshesh and Chiefs: "The Boers, they lifted us up from the ground.") Who gave you food when you were starving? (Moshesh and Chiefs: "The Boers.") . . . Well then, I have now come again to lift you up from the ground upon which you are now lying morally prostrate, by reason of your thieving and encroachments on the white man's land. My object in coming here, is to restore your character as a nation of Basutos, to take away from you the reproach of being a nation of thieves. To effect this, you Moshesh and Captains must help me, and that honestly. We must establish authorities, police and laws, to put down theft and aggression.

Moshesh: "It was my intention to offer you a police, and I shall assist you to the utmost. Peace therefore is ratified."

The old Chief then with his own hands planted the flag saying: "Let this be a remembrance to all, White and Black, that peace is now for ever more."

Moshesh and his Captains said that their earnest desire was to live in peace with the Boers.

It was then arranged that the Chiefs and their Councillors should meet the next morning to ratify the peace, and come to a proper understanding by treaty. . . .

The next morning the President and Moshesh, attended by their respective Councils, again met. . . .

Mr. Pretorius and his Raad . . . assisted to draw up the treaty in English and Dutch . . . and a treaty to the following effect was agreed upon :—

Peace between the Free State and the Basuto Country is hereby ratified and guaranteed by the Chiefs in the name of their people.

A court consisting of a Resident and two members appointed by the President and the same number appointed by Moshesh shall constitute a Court for the punishment of thefts and settlement of all disputes between the Whites and the Blacks. The decision of this Court to be final. The laws for the punishment of theft to be agreed upon between the President and Moshesh. Moshesh to provide ten policemen to assist the Court at the Residency and 200 police at different points to be in readiness when called upon.

The Residency shall be at the old Mission Station Merumetsu, and shall be named Ga Bokhotso, *The Mother of Peace*.

The Laws shall be equal to all.

A further agreement was entered into, to the effect that the owners of the abandoned farms return to their homesteads, Moshesh guaranteeing their safety and protection.

Moshesh agreed that the cases of theft since the truce between the Free State and the Basutos be referred to the Resident's Court for decision. . . .

The treaty then having been read was solemnly signed by Moshesh, the President, and their Councillors. The party then retired to partake of a *déjeuner*, during which several toasts were drunk,

Moshesh proposing "alle oude questies tot niet," to which Mr. Pretorius replied: "Old Father Moshesh, that won't do. Everlasting friendship, if you like, from henceforth, but all the old questions we can't settle in this way"—a retort which the old Chief enjoyed exceedingly. Other toasts were then drunk, and songs sung by Moshesh's sons to the tunes of "God save the Queen" and "Sweet Home."

Moshesh passed the night in Mr. Pretorius's tent, and the next morning he and Mr. Pretorius reviewed a portion of the Basuto Army, numbering about 6,000 cavalry. . . . Moshesh danced like mad, and thus the Conference broke up.

There was nothing genuine in the asseverations of either party, whose meeting on this occasion did more harm than good; nothing whatever was done to carry out the terms of the agreement in respect of the Resident's Court or police force and the whole arrangement collapsed under general ridicule. The Chief promised at the Conference to remove a location of Bushmen who were continually marauding in the vicinity of Vechtkop but neglected to do so, with the result that a party of them one day attacked the house of a farmer named Hever, brutally maltreated a woman and killed a child. Exaggerated reports connecting the Basuto with the crime caused intense alarm as it was said that Poshudi had incited and aided the culprits. Consequently the burghers flew into laager and several hundred took the field under Pretorius who immediately followed up the Bushmen, killing all that were to be found in the neighbourhood. Moshesh

also sent his son Letsie to pursue a band who had fled to Poshudi for protection; these were hunted down and the whole rascally clan nearly exterminated.

For the next twelve months nothing exciting occurred. According to reports of the time, the Basuto ignored the northern boundary laid down by Sir George Grey in 1858 and encroached upon the farms in Winburg District with impunity. The President was irritated, complaining again and again, but was content to meet Moshesh occasionally to patch up individual disputes and adjust the line where it was possible to do so for mutual advantage.

In the interval Nehemiah came into serious collision with the Pondomise Chief Umbali in Kaffraria. Moshesh was not altogether displeased at the opportunity of interfering upon the excuse of going to the rescue of his son who had been roughly handled and forced back. He always feared that in time to come he would have to recoil before the Boers over the Treaty line of 1858, and cherished the hope of gaining a hinterland below and east of the Drakensberg which was but sparsely populated by the Kaffrarian tribes, and where he claimed to enjoy a cession of territory from Faku, chief of the Pondos; but he was nervous of taking effective measures in that direction lest he should come under censure of the High Commissioner who exercised a shadowy protectorate there. As a feeler, however, he approved the proposal of his fighting son Masupha to go with an impi to Nehemiah's assistance. Against the wish of Letsie, the eldest son, Masupha accompanied by Poshudi proceeded across the mountain on a roving expedition which proved rather disastrous.



SEKUNYANE NEHEMIAH, SON OF MOSHESH.





He found Nehemiah in retreat and himself fell into an ambuscade laid for him by the Pondomise and being weak in numbers and pressed for food returned home ignominiously without booty or honour.

A galling sensation was caused in September 1861 by rumours of insults offered to Mr. Van Zoelen, Landdrost of Bloemfontein, when on a mission from the President to Thaba Bosigo to adjust if possible, yet without personal knowledge of the facts, certain disputes regarding the line in Winburg District where no proper beacons had ever been erected. It was publicly stated and believed at Bloemfontein that Van Zoelen had been threatened and ejected by Moshesh who was alleged to have openly declared that his meetings and treaties with President Pretorius amounted to nothing more than the interchange of gossip ; that he had never acknowledged any boundaries and would never do so. The reports were denied by Mr. Orpen who frequently intervened to try and give the true complexion of these distorted affairs. But the public mind of the Free State was so possessed of its truth that it despaired of ever being able to regulate matters without another war against the Basuto, whose defiance and violation of promises were held to be unbearable.

Early in January 1862, Mr. Austen on his way back to Herschel after a visit to Moshesh observed unusual movement of armed men as if on the war-path and discovered that Poshudi was in the field with a strong force near Vechtkop bent on exacting vengeance on account of thefts and the murder of one of his principal men by the retainers of Jan Letelle. That chieftain got scent of the expedition and fled ; but many of his

people awaited the attack which was delivered with swiftness and the usual ferocity ; kralls were burned, cattle swept off and several men killed. Moshesh was aware of the raid and enjoined upon its leaders the necessity of being careful to limit their attentions to Jan Letelle only. In the scuffle, however, amongst other things 600 sheep belonging to a farmer named Aldum were captured and driven off.

Extravagant rumours at once spread through the Free State ; the farmers formed laagers and the President hurriedly raising a burgher commando concentrated at Smithfield from whence he sent a vigorous letter demanding immediate reparation from the Basuto, who in turn became excited and the whole country was convulsed.

There were bellicose people on both sides favourable to blows ; the locality was a hot-bed of bad characters, white and black, always ready to receive and dispose of stolen property or to foment disturbance. The incident might easily have ripened into an open rupture but for the further good offices of Mr. Orpen at whose instigation matters were suspended until he could ascertain more of the facts and interview Moshesh over whom he had a commanding influence. With his usual promptness he proceeded to Thaba Bosigo and calmed the natives. By his advice Moshesh sent his son Tsekelo as a hostage to Pretorius suggesting that restraint be placed upon Letelle and an inquiry set on foot. Pretorius agreed and the excitement subsided ; a Commission appointed to investigate the affair came to the conclusion that the entire blame rested upon the Free State *protégé* Letelle whose removal was strongly

urged. The President therefore informed Moshesh that he would not go to war for the sake of that chieftain, upon whose side he found too much filth. "I will not," he wrote, "pick an assegai out of the dung to throw at you."

The sheep and other property of Mr. Aldum inadvertently taken in the *mêlée* were returned with compensation and the matter ended, though it all showed how ready the country was to be plunged into war by any alarm, real or artificial.

Mr. Burnet, the Civil Commissioner of Aliwal North, deputed to make political reports to the British Government, put the dangerous aspect of affairs like this very clearly in his letter to the High Commissioner of 13th January, 1862 (extract) :—

“. . . The whole affair appears to have been a plundering foray with no intention of bloodshed.

"In this way, however, a war may commence at any moment. It is only wonderful that Jan Letelle, being an ally of the Free State ever since the war of 1858,—living under Boer protection on the border, continually plundering his own countrymen, without any sort of supervision being exercised over him by his present patrons,—but on the contrary being encouraged to steal all he possibly could lay hands upon from the Basutos, as well as from the Boers, by a set of bad white men, traders and others, who purchase all he can steal and send it off, all these things considered, it is really surprising that some of the powerful Basuto Chiefs have not long ago combined and annihilated him !

“He is allowed by the Free State Government to get as much ammunition as he can purchase, and no notice is taken of it.

“The only way in which it is at all possible to explain this egregious folly, which is certain at no very distant day to lead to the most calamitous results, is that the border Boers find it much cheaper and more convenient to get Jan Letelle to go in and steal horses, for which they pay him very low prices, than to go into Basutoland themselves, in terms of the treaty, and try to find what they pretend to have lost. This course of conduct warrants Poshudi and others in making such reprisals as the present upon Letelle, following them up far within the Free State territory. These Boers fear the exposure of this most iniquitous system, and cry aloud, ‘If Letelle be moved from this frontier, we must all trek and abandon our farms.’

“Whereas so long as this vagabond is upon this border, there will be no end of disturbances and misunderstandings with the Basutos.

“(Signed) JOHN BURNET.”

At that date Sir George Grey, whose capricious recall though temporary caused much inconvenience and irritation, finally renounced the office of High Commissioner, to be succeeded by Sir Philip Wodehouse. This change marks an epoch in the story of Basutoland and serves for the purpose of a brief retrospect of the preceding stormy years.

History had made itself fast. The Basuto had formed the acquaintance of and alternately come into contact with a strange variety of Governors, Presidents

and other high personages. Naturally strong in diplomacy, the experience gave them a higher education in that art which nevertheless failed them as it failed their adversaries when associated with too much subterfuge on the one side or with too much bluff on the other. They had good reason as a nation for feeling at intervals the intoxication of their success ; but that feeling if enjoyed by the people as a whole did not exert the same influence over the mind of Moshesh ; he was growing old and anxious as the years crept on, for his sons though able enough individually were ambitious and divided amongst themselves. The knowledge of that inspired him more and more to crave for the extension over his country of some kind and fatherly control such as the great Queen of England could grant if it could only be done without too much "ruling." It was true that the Free State had been demoralized by failure ; but the white population, including many English settlers, was fast increasing, and Moshesh knew better than any that an hour of reaction would set in when, unless protected, he must succumb to the superior forces of civilization.

Indications of his failing powers are to be found in several contemporary records. The Wesleyan missionary Mr. Daniell, a warm friend of the Basuto, wrote in 1861 that the infatuation of Moshesh was leading to his own destruction ; that he had grasped land in violation of treaties the obligations of which he could not appreciate ; and that the only thing to save the country was by making it a British Protectorate. This opinion was fortified by that of Mr.

Mabille, one of the most eminent of the French Protestants, who added that the missionaries were weary of the old Chief and anxious to be rid of him. Mr. Burnet, whose cordial admiration of the Chief for many years was conspicuous, in a letter of July 29, 1861, to the High Commissioner for the first time expressed a changed opinion. He said :—

“ . . . Moshesh has not the slightest confidence in anybody, British, Colonial, Free State or Basuto, save only in himself. ‘I am Basutoland.’ In spite of all my friend Orpen’s bolstering up, Moshesh will never be anything but a great humbug, an old liar and deceiver, without one particle of truth, faith, honesty or sincerity. Major Warden’s words are true : ‘You cannot trust Moshesh.’ ”

It was a very hard character to give the old Chief; but it seemed to represent the estimate formed of him by nearly all who tested him long enough. Yet it must be remembered that he had to deal with keen adversaries and to feel his way at every turn round their devices : nor could he forget that he had often been duped by pledges given in the best of faith by British officers who, when called away, left them to be fulfilled, or not, by others. Wariness and deception are freely quoted against him ; but, little reckoning is taken of his innumerable acts of good faith.

Age however did not obscure from his mind the true drift of affairs, pointing as it did to the stern necessity of placing Basutoland in safe hands if possible. The visit of His Royal Highness the Duke of Edin-

burgh to South Africa gave him a chance to lead the way in August 1860. On that occasion, though shaky in health, he travelled to Aliwal North, distant there and back about 300 miles, in great state to meet the Prince to whom he poured forth his loyalty in copious showers and handed a letter for presentation to the Queen praying to be restored to the same position as he formerly held as one of Her Majesty's subjects. The meaning of that appeal was not lost upon the ever sincere Sir George Grey who at a later date wrote to the Secretary of State (now the Duke of Newcastle) recommending the delegation of a Special Agent to ascertain the true sentiments and wishes of the Basuto. He wrote at the same time to Moshesh as follows :—

*Letter from HIGH COMMISSIONER to CHIEF MOSHESH*

" CAPE TOWN, 14th August, 1861.

" GREAT CHIEF MOSHESH,

" Before quitting the Colony I think it right as an old friend of yours to write to you, wishing you goodbye. I hope happiness and prosperity and good order may be the lot of yourself and of your people, and that you may continue to preserve peace as a most inestimable treasure. . . . I am sorry that no complete settlement has yet been come to of your relations with the British Government, which you would regard as altogether satisfactory to me before leaving the Colony. I have written to the Home Government to know if they would approve of an Agent being sent especially to inquire into your wishes, who, when he had fully

ascertained these, could with you reduce them to writing in such form that they could be clearly understood. My successor will write further to you on this subject. In the meantime I wish yourself and your children farewell. Goodbye. From your friend,  
 “(Signed) G. GREY.”

To the proposal to send an Agent for the purpose named Her Majesty's Government assented in a despatch of 17th October, 1861; but it was not immediately acted upon owing to the interregnum caused by the unfortunate displacement of the Governor.

Subsequently Moshesh returned to the subject when addressing a letter of welcome and petition to await the arrival of the new High Commissioner Sir Philip Wodehouse. The essential points in his petition are contained in the following extracts from a long letter relating the history of past years and the grievances of his countrymen :—

*From the* CHIEF MOSHESH *to* HIGH COMMISSIONER  
 SIR PHILIP WODEHOUSE

“THABA BOSIGO, 6th December 1861.

“. . . Therefore I now ask to be recognized as the Queen's subject, and that my subjects, the Basutos, may, on account of and through my chieftainship, be Her subjects too. I ask this of Her generosity, for we have nothing to offer in exchange but our gratitude and fidelity; though, if it were asked or necessary, every Basuto would willingly offer his life in Her service. . . .



“I am not perhaps altogether unable to defend my own country, but this I am unable to do—to keep from it the constant expectation of being attacked; this does my people no good. Such security Government alone can give me. It is, therefore, that I ask to be received, that my people may never again be disturbed with thoughts of war, and may build and cultivate, and grow in civilization.

“If it should please Her Majesty to appoint an agent to reside with me and communicate with me, and be Her ears and eyes, (such an appointment as Sir George Clerk recommended, and Sir George Grey also spoke of,) I would receive him with gladness. It is an arrangement provided even in my original treaty, and had it been carried out much mischief might have been prevented. . . .

“If I should be received I would wish that the land of the Basuto should continue to be recognized as mine, as it remains at present, for other tribes dispute it with me. . . .

“In one part my country extends beyond the Quathlamba. It is where my son Nehemiah is established. The boundaries of this part as they have been agreed upon with the surrounding native tribes, I cannot to-day exactly describe, but I will shortly point them out to your Excellency in a letter. . . .

“I do not anticipate that the inhabitants of the Free State will have any objection to make against my being received, for the thing I ask is a security for peace between us, and those who desire war and cause it are in all lands few, and those who suffer by it many. Besides, the document they have received from the

Queen giving them the right to govern themselves, gives them no right whatever to object either to my being received or to my receiving ammunition. No such promise was ever made to them or implied, and even if it were, my alliance is older than their independence.

“ Mark X of Moshesh.



Seal.

“ I, the Chief of the Basutos, have confirmed this.”

It is almost unreasonable to expect material changes for betterment to have come over the Basuto country or people during a period of stress when all thoughts were centred upon war and its possibilities. The nation had been latterly standing at military attention ready to present arms at an instant word of command. The most fertile source of agitation arose from the ever present boundary dispute, often springing from causes other than contempt of treaty delimitations. As previously stated, some of the boundary points were notoriously ambiguous ; roads used for demarcation in any one year might disappear or become worn out and deserted in the next ; hills and spruits changed names according to the whims of local authorities until their original identity was lost ; and occasionally mutual adjustments were made without being officially recorded.

Yet withal, organic changes were taking place almost unperceived. Continual intercourse with civilized people experienced by those natives, an increasing quantity, who went out to work ; intercourse with enlightened visitors, even that occasioned by war and



GIRLS AT HEATHEN SCHOOL.



the conferences attending it—each produced its effect in cultivating intelligence and general knowledge. But above all the French missionaries, unaffected by disappointments and the devastation of their settlements, had pursued faithfully the aim to which they had devoted themselves, namely, that of educating and elevating the race to a higher standard of life. The result, small as it might appear, was perceptible in the reformed habits of such as embraced Christianity who set an example of conduct and decency which found many disciples. European clothing, implements and other manufactured goods came into general use through the agency of traders established near the villages of all important chiefs. Though many of the wilder spirits could not shake off the habits of brigandage, the majority of the Basuto, in spite of the common allegation that they revelled in war, disliked it then as they have always done, for they were not a pugnacious people.

In the midst of his many perplexities, Moshesh had not been entirely unmindful of his duties to promote improvements in tribal conditions. Thus we find that of his own accord, though stimulated probably by his missionaries, he issued soon after the abandonment of the Sovereignty, before new laws were enacted to replace those in operation under the British régime, what was termed an “Ordinance” intended to check the liquor traffic. It did not entirely effect the object desired because the number of blackguards infesting the border who lived on the spoils of that traffic was too large for him to contend with ; but it reveals his sentiments on the subject which acquired

emphasis from the fact that he obstinately refused to drink brandy himself. This curious document is doubly interesting on account of its odd phraseology :—

ORDINANCE AGAINST THE INTRODUCTION AND SALE  
OF SPIRITUOUS LIQUORS IN THE TERRITORY OF  
THE BASUTOS

“Whereas the spirituous liquors of the whites were unknown to former generations of our tribe, Matie, and Motlomi until Bomonageng,—and our father Mokhachane, now very advanced in age, has never used any other drink than water and milk; and whereas we deem that a good Chief and Judge cannot claim to be competent to execute his duties, if he make use of anything of an intoxicating nature; and whereas spirituous liquors create quarrelling and strife, and pave the way to the destruction of society (for surely the spirituous liquors of the whites are nothing else than fire) :

“It is therefore hereby made known to all, that the introduction and sale of said spirituous liquor within Basutoland is henceforth prohibited, and provided any person, whether white or coloured, contravene this order, the spirits shall be taken from him and poured out on the ground, without excuse or indemnification.

“And this order shall be printed in the Sesuto and Dutch languages, and posted up at the places of public meetings, and in the villages of the Basuto.

“Given with the advice and concurrence of the great men of our Tribe, by us the Chief of the Basutos, at Thaba Bosigo, the 8th of November, 1854.

“(Signed) MOSHESH, Chief.”

Again, as regards witchcraft and sorcery, to which Moshesh in common with the great mass was supposed to be firmly wedded. It is related that in a fit of humour he once ordered a trusty attendant secretly to conceal a weapon he was particularly partial to and then sent a herald first to proclaim the loss, then to call upon the great Medicine men to "throw the bones" and divine the thief. They set to work in earnest, and as was customary, named or "smelt out" as the thieves certain individuals inimical either to the craft or to the Chief. He then informed them that he had designedly hidden the weapon in order that he might prove the mockery of their profession. The story is easy of credit, for as will be seen from another quaint proclamation, he forbade the practice of witchcraft under severe penalties :—

## PROCLAMATION BY MOSHESH

"THABA BOSIGO, 27th August, 1855.

"The word of Moshesh on witchcraft.—I am Moshesh, I write to my people and say to them: you remember that formerly when any one resorted to the witch, the public heard of it, that it was well known before anything was done, and that one would go far to consult the wizard, even to Zululand.

"But at the present day witches abound among the Basutos, and it is our people, sitting quietly, see one come unexpectedly to announce that some man has been killed on the word of the witch, and sometimes also that many have been killed, though the public be ignorant of the time and cause for having resorted to the enchanter. These wizards are wild dreamers, they

ought to be brought together, and one propose them this hard question as a text : The lung sickness, where does it come from, destroying flocks everywhere throughout our land ? Where has it originated ? When shall it end, and what time, that plague which covers the whole earth ? that would be a question worth putting to witches. Instead of this, they are only told of a man that is ill, and upon this some one is killed. It is generally known that these men are mere dreamers of fantastic imaginations. . . .

“At Mokhachane’s, people do not resort to the witch, neither at Moshesh’s, nor at Letsie’s, nor Poshudi’s, Mogalie, Ramanela, Molapo, Masupha or Moperi. But in the smaller towns, people go to the witch constantly, making of this custom a sort of gametrap (profitable trade); let that trap ensnare them, and no one will have pity on them.

“However the people must be told of it first, that they may know of it beforehand ; they have heard of Mpatsi, how he has lately killed Ramothibila.<sup>1</sup> No one is to suppose, that though a rare thing sentence of death is not passed among us when a man kills another (and who knows but Mpatsi was insane?). Now, when any one is killed in a case of witchcraft, the murderer will be most severely judged and sentenced to death. This word is for public information, and will stand as law, and is assented to by Letsie, by all my brothers, and by all men in the tribe, who spit on the lie of witchcraft, and cover its face with their spittle.

“Mark X of Moshesh, Chief of the Basutos.”

<sup>1</sup> Ramothibila was killed, on the word of the witch, and the murderer Mpatsi sentenced to death by the chief Letsie.



The question of higher education also was not allowed to slumber. Under warm encouragement and the promise of financial support from Sir George Grey in the name of H.M. Government, the foundations of the establishment, under supervision of the French missionaries, of a Normal School for the preparation of native teachers were laid. Religious and moral training were to be the basis of instruction; but it was to be associated with the rudimental teaching of such useful trades and handicrafts as were likely to advance the natives towards civilization. As a contribution towards this effort, the Chief, in a document subscribed to by himself and his heir, allocated a substantial area within which the missionaries were to have absolute control and liberty to conduct their operations.

But probably the most important act of the Chief was to proclaim a law under which traders might obtain sites for their shops within Basutoland. In that document he laid it down most clearly that land allotted to white people in Basutoland for trading or other purposes was not to be construed as property granted on title or to be sold from one to another. In this enactment, crude as it was, underlay the future system of land tenure by foreigners; from it there has never since been any variation. It had the effect of making the Paramount Chief the Trustee of the whole country and prohibiting all chiefs from ceding permanently on any terms the land of their inheritance owned in community. No provision could have been wiser; it was the means of saving an infinity of trouble for generations to follow.

## THE LAW FOR TRADE

"BETHESDA, 6th September, 1859.

"I, Moshesh, write for any trader, whoever he may be, already in my land, and for any who may come to trade with the Basutos ; my word is this :

"Trade to me and my Tribe is a good thing ; I wish to promote it.

"Any trader who wishes to establish a shop, must first obtain permission from me. Should he build a house, I grant him no right to sell it. Further, I do not grant him liberty to plough the fields, but only to plant a small vegetable garden. The trader who fancies that the place he is sojourning in belongs to him, must dismiss the thought ; if not, he is to quit ; for there is no place belonging to the whites in my land, and I have granted no white man a place, either by word, or by writing. Further, any trader who leaves a debt there from whence he comes, and he who contracts any whilst in my land, any such debt, if brought to me, I will inquire into, in our Court of Justice, that I may settle it ; and the debt will be paid up in the manner the Basutos pay their debts. But the suer is to appear before me, and the debtor likewise, that justice may be done. . . .

"Mark X of Moshesh, Chief of the Basutos."

While therefore Moshesh had his share of faults consisting chiefly of the cunning order that baffled friend and foe alike, and savoured so much of insincerity—a palpable feature in his character—it cannot be denied that his reign thus far was characterized by statesmanship and by repugnance to acts of barbarism

from which he manfully strove to restrain a nation still prone to outbursts of fury. Furthermore, his three acts of primitive legislation erecting barriers against liquor-drinking, witchcraft and land alienation are outstanding tributes to the forethought and wisdom he displayed.

We have here to take leave of Sir George Grey who, after an association but slightly broken of eight years with his friends the Basuto and other tribes whom he befriended, was in 1862 to bid farewell to them and to South Africa.

Throughout his South African experience he could never divorce from his mind that his predecessors had, with the sanction of Her Majesty's Government, entered upon various Treaties with the Native States, and that, however lightly we may have shuffled out of them, they left obligations which no right-minded representative of the Queen dare forget or ignore. It is impossible to trace in any letter or despatch bearing his name, thoughts that were not lofty or proposals not in the main sound. That occasionally his suggestions were held to be unsound was due more to the fact that at times they involved expense or inconvenience which those above him were reluctant to face. It is recorded that at one critical period of his career at the Cape he was compelled by the culpable negligence of Downing Street to adopt the unprecedented course of advancing £6,000 of his private income to carry on the Government of British Kaffraria.<sup>1</sup>

As observed in a previous chapter, Sir George Grey gave public utterance to the opinion that the future peace and prosperity of South Africa depended upon the federa-

<sup>1</sup> "Life and Times of Sir George Grey," by W. L. Rees.

tion of the different Colonies, including the Native States if they wished it, upon all of whom should devolve a large measure of self-government. He went so far as to place this view before the Cape Houses of Parliament in a minute containing the following sentence :—

“ You would, in my belief, confer a lasting benefit upon Great Britain and upon the inhabitants of this country if you could succeed in devising a form of federal union, under which the several provinces composing it should have full and free scope of action left to them, through their own local governments and legislatures, upon all subjects relating to their individual prosperity or happiness ; whilst they should act under a general federal government in relation to all points which concern the general safety or weal.”

These words, delivered without previously consulting Her Majesty's Government, gave offence at the Colonial Office in London, then in the hands of Sir E. B. Lytton and Lord Carnarvon who charged the Governor with unconstitutional behaviour and, upon this flimsy pretext, in a long despatch of June 4, 1859, reviewing his whole administration, called upon him to surrender his government and return to England. In the course of this communication the Secretary of State said :—

“ I acknowledge the large and comprehensive nature of your views, the mixture of firmness and benevolence which has characterized your dealing with the native races, the sagacity with which you have foreseen and averted probable collisions, and the able policy by which you have availed yourself of unexpected and

strange events in their history, so as to use them at once for their advantage and for the security of the Colony. I am very conscious of the serious nature of the steps taken by Her Majesty's Government when they deprive themselves of the services of one so highly endowed as yourself; but I am also satisfied that no other alternative is left them. They could not safely continue to entrust with your present functions one committed, as you have committed yourself, to a policy of which they disapprove on a subject of first importance; nor could they expect from you the necessary assistance when steps, which you have taken without that authority, have of necessity to be retracted."

Sir George Grey did not require to defend himself. He remonstrated in a dignified manner; but it was only necessary for him to make a few plain statements. He reminded the Secretary of State that the problems he had had to combat were the inevitable consequence of Her Majesty's Government resolving hurriedly to rid itself of costly and troublesome possessions in the Sovereignty without taking due precautions to leave behind it any established form of government. Was a man, he asked, who assumed responsibility on a distant and exposed frontier surrounded by difficulties, with invasions of H.M. territories threatening on several points, to be fairly judged in respect of the urgency of that responsibility by those who in the quiet of distant offices in London know nothing of the anxieties or nature of the difficulties he had to encounter? "If," he added, "Her Majesty's possessions and subjects are saved from threatening dangers, and

they gratefully acknowledge this, whilst the Empire receives no hurt, is it a fitting return that the only reward he should receive should be the highest punishment which it is in the power of Her Majesty's Ministers to inflict? This may be the reward they bestow : but the true one of the consciousness of difficult duties performed to the best of his ability, with great personal sacrifice, they cannot take from him. . . .

“ With regard to any necessity which might exist for my removal on the ground of not holding the same views upon essential points of policy as Her Majesty's Government hold, I can only make the general remark that during the five years which have elapsed since I was appointed to my present office there have been at least seven Secretaries of State for the Colonial Department, each of whom held different views upon some important points of policy connected with this country.”

Sir George Grey returned to England to find Sir E. B. Lytton and Lord Carnarvon replaced at the Colonial Office by the Duke of Newcastle who almost angrily reversed their policy. He had in fact endeavoured to intercept the recalled Governor on his way home with the news that his recall was cancelled and that it was the urgent desire of Her Majesty's Government that he should resume at once his duties at the Cape, in his performance of which the fullest confidence was reposed. He did so ; but the sting of the treatment he had received never left him. His work lived after him, and lives, in the monumental form of Hospitals, Libraries, Schools established by him, and affection graven in the memory of South Africa.



Photo by Alexander Bassano, 25 Old Bond Street.

SIR PHILIP WODEHOUSE.





## CHAPTER XVII

Sir Philip Wodehouse succeeds Sir George Grey: makes proposals, which are approved, for placing Agent in Basutoland but they are not acted upon: sends Commission to ascertain feelings of Basuto: is implored to adjust boundaries: is hampered by Imperial policy, hesitates, agrees, withdraws and finally does so: its value discounted by indiscreet statements: his award is in favour of Free State which strengthens it but disappoints Basuto: prospect dark

1862—1864

SIR PHILIP WODEHOUSE no sooner landed in Cape Town on January 12, 1862, than he set to work upon the northern problem which his predecessor had struggled so hard to solve. Whether upon his own initiative or upon instructions from England he started off with the new policy of associating the Cape Colonial Government closely with the general administration of all those South African affairs pertaining to the High Commissioner, claiming not only their assistance in the conduct of business that must be of deep interest to themselves but the aid of their finance if needs be.

In a minute to that government of January 23rd he dealt with the petition by Moshesh, referred to in the previous chapter, for British protection, point-

ing out the serious consequences of assent, viz. the responsibility involved in undertaking the administration of Basutoland and the control of its relations with other States ; if those relations became strained, British intervention with all its risks and cost must follow ; therefore it was necessary to proceed with the utmost circumspection and not to comply with the Basuto application without positive assurance that any conditions imposed would be fully observed.

He then introduced himself by letter to Moshesh and President Pretorius. He informed Moshesh that the Queen had approved a Commission being sent to ascertain the views and wishes of the Basuto respecting the present and future position ; for that purpose Messrs. Burnet and Orpen had been selected ; but they would have no power to do more than submit a report.

To Pretorius he wrote in terms of strong remonstrance and emphatic warning stating that, if war ensued with the Basuto on account of the unrestrained depredations of Jan Letelle, a chieftain domiciled within the Free State, he could only regard the neglect of the Free State to curb him as unfriendly to the Queen's Government who would feel at liberty to set aside existing Treaties and enter upon new arrangements for the preservation of order. At the same time he acquainted the President with the plans for despatch of a Commission to Moshesh.

In reporting his action to the Secretary of State he felt bound to admit that the language of his urgent remonstrance to the Free State was not endorsed by the Cape Ministry ; he felt however unable to yield to their protest as it was necessary to claim in plain terms

the right of adopting protective measures which the misconduct of our neighbours forced upon us.

President Pretorius, in a reply of February 17, did not conceal his ill-humour with this opening communication from the new High Commissioner. He regretted the threatening tone in which it was couched, attributing it to the animus of persons ill-disposed to the Free State who had not allowed the Governor to become acquainted with both sides of the question ; he justified the conduct of his government towards Letelle, who was less to blame than Poshudi, and in turn threatened the Governor that should an attempt be made to set aside the existing Convention, a direct appeal against such a course would be made to Her Majesty. Meanwhile, he protested against the conclusion of any arrangements with Moshesh unless approved by the Free State Government. This early correspondence caused an unfortunate breach in relations which never really mended ; it gave the impression that the Governor was indifferent to the sufferings of the farmers and prejudiced in favour of the natives.

Messrs. John Burnet and Joseph Orpen, upon receiving their commissions together with written instructions for their guidance on the mission to Basutoland, proceeded there on the 11th February 1862. Moshesh received them cordially ; having heard their instructions he begged to be supplied with a memorandum of the points for discussion and a few days' adjournment whilst the chiefs and people were summoned. As this meeting brought out clearly the true feelings of the Basuto in respect of the form of government they desired and served as a basis from which to frame the administrative

Charter eventually granted to them, it is important to record the character of the proceedings.

MEMORANDUM BY THE COMMISSIONERS

*for the guidance and consideration of the Chief Moshesh, during the Conference to be held between the Chief and Messrs. Burnet and Orpen, appointed by the authority of His Excellency the Governor, dated 28th January, 1862, for the purpose of ascertaining the Chief's views and wishes in respect of his present and future relations with the Colonial Government*

The Commissioners have no power or authority to treat with Moshesh in any way,—the object of their mission is simply to confer with the Chief, and to endeavour to ascertain distinctly his views and wishes on the above subject.

The letters at different times addressed to the Government by Moshesh have not been sufficiently definite to enable the Government to arrive at any practical result from them. The Commissioners are therefore to point out the impossibility of any action being taken upon them unless Moshesh clearly and distinctly expresses his feelings, and opens his mind freely and without reservation.

It is by no means clear from Moshesh's letter of the 6th December, 1861, which of the treaties or agreements recited therein is the one preferred by Moshesh, whether that made by him with Sir George Napier, Sir Peregrine Maitland or Sir Harry Smith.

Should Moshesh be desirous of again placing himself and his people under the sovereignty of the Queen and should her Majesty assent to such a proposition Moshesh's position would then be this :—

Neither he nor any of his subordinate Chiefs could thereafter be permitted to exercise unrestricted jurisdiction, but they would be bound to act both within and beyond their own limits in strict conformity with such rules and regulations as would be from time to time promulgated for that purpose by Her Majesty's Government ; and the Basuto Chiefs and people would also be required to submit to the jurisdiction of European magistrates should it be found expedient to appoint such officers.

His Excellency the Governor, without further information than he at present possesses, is not prepared to form a definite opinion upon the claim of Moshesh to the country occupied by Nehemiah, south of the Drakensberg, as a part of his territory, or in any way to admit it.

The Conference extended over several days and was of a most interesting description. Moshesh, after being patiently allowed to have translated all the old treaties and agreements, addressed his people as follows in the supposition that they were considering definite proposals for the British Government to take them over :—

“You must now listen that you may know what I have done for you when I was young and strong ; how I have watched over your interests. Now I am old and about to become blind like an old goat. The treaties you have been listening to were only temporary arrangements, but now . . . I am going to make arrangements which will last for ever.”

The Commissioners pointed out to the Chief that he had asked to be received by the Queen as a *subject*,

one of the conditions of which was that Government should have the power of appointing magistrates, so that both he and other Chiefs must be under certain restrictions and be bound to conform to rules and regulations for the conduct of affairs. Those words made him nervous and fearful of imposing a Government upon his people which they were not prepared to accept or obey. He replied :—

“ If the Government send magistrates the Basutos will not understand. It will be like a stone that is too heavy for them to carry. What I desire is this : that the Queen should send a man to live with me, who will be her ear and eye, and also her hand to work with me in political matters. He will practise the Basutos and gradually teach them to hear magistrates, while he is helping me in political matters. He will show them how these things are done in Cape Colony. He should be a man who would be fully trusted by everybody, and he must know our ignorance and our ways. I fear to put my people under something which they cannot understand ; they are like little children who must first be taught the A B C.”

He went on to state in response to further questions what was really in his heart, viz. to gain British protection without severe control. Even at that early period in their history the nation seemed to cling tenaciously to the desire for independence and home rule.

“ If,” he said, “ I obtain an Agent, I will be under the Queen as her subject, and my people will be her subjects also, but under me. I am like a man who has a house ; the man rules the house and all that is in

it, and the Government rules him. My 'house' is Basutoland. So that the Queen rules my people only through me. The man whom I ask from the Queen to live with me will guide and direct me and communicate between me and the Government. I shall then consider myself to be under the Queen's authority. I shall be like a blind man, but when he directs me I shall be considered wise; when the Agent and I agree as to what is right I shall carry it out and he will report it to the Government. I wish to govern my own people by native law, by our own laws; but if the Queen wish after this to introduce other laws into my country, I would be willing; but I should wish such laws to be submitted to the Council of the Basutos; and when they are accepted by my Council, I will send to the Queen and inform her that they have become law. . . .

“I do not want anything further at present from the Government in relation to my being received as the Queen's subject, for, as I have already explained, I cannot fulfil the conditions attached by the Governor to my being received in the way I requested in my letter. My people are not ready for it. I said in my letter that if I were received by the Queen, nobody would ever think of attacking me, and I think if what I now ask were acceded to, the affairs of my country would become satisfactory to Government.”

These remarkable words uttered by a Kaffir Chief in the year 1862 are worthy of attention—not only as a true forecast of what happened in time to come but as affording an object-lesson in the art of self-government suitable to many parts of the Queen's dominions.

The Commissioners in forwarding their Report expressed the difficulty experienced in unravelling the mind of Moshesh who appeared mistrustful, fearing the mission had some deep design. Messrs. Burnet and Orpen are entitled to gratitude for the patience displayed on this occasion whilst listening to days of desultory conversation. By such means only were they able to obtain in clear form a reflection of the feelings of the Basuto people—feelings which have animated them from that time until this present day as may be seen on reference to the petition presented to His Majesty the King in February 1909, relative to the position of Basutoland under Unified South Africa.

The substance of the Report is contained in the following extract :—

“The views and wishes of the Chief with regard to his relations with Her Majesty’s Government, as clearly as they appear to the Commissioners to present themselves to his own mind, may be summed up as follows :—

“Moshesh considers himself to have been from the commencement of his relationship with Government Her Majesty’s subject, and that more especially so since the arrangements made by him with Sir Peregrine Maitland in 1845 placed him under Her authority as a ‘soldier.’

“He does not and will not acknowledge that this connection has ever been severed, but he maintains that it has been strengthened by the subsequent arrangements with Sir Harry Smith in 1848.

“He considers that the establishment by Her



Majesty's Government of an agency in his country, as desired by him, would confirm him as Her subject, and be the means of establishing and the medium of exercising Her authority over himself and his people under him.

“While thus maintaining his right to be considered a British subject, he does not see any other mode of governing his people at present except by native law administered by himself (as a feudal chief).

“The establishment of European magistrates he thinks could not at present be effected in his country, as his people are too ignorant to understand such a measure.

“The establishment of an Agent to whom he would bind himself to listen on all important matters would, he considers, pave the way gradually for the introduction of British magistrates and British law.

“Moshesh would be willing to support the introduction of British laws by the Queen's Government, provided these were submitted to his council for approval.

“Were a Government Agent appointed, and his own views of his relations as a British subject thus recognized, he would at once relinquish his right to inflict capital punishment without the sanction of Government, and also the right of making war without the Queen's consent.

“Under such an arrangement Moshesh would consider himself entitled to acquire supplies of ammunition in such measure as Government might think the conduct of his people showed them to deserve.

“As far as the Commissioners could incidentally ascertain, the most influential of Moshesh's sons and

chiefs, and the great majority of his people, coincide with him in these views and wishes.

“ (Signed) JOHN BURNET  
JOSEPH M. ORPEN } Commissioners.

“ THABA BOSIGO,  
“ 22nd February, 1862.”

Sir Philip Wodehouse in a despatch of 19th April transmitting the Report and full minutes of the Commission to the Secretary of State strongly recommended the appointment of an Agent to be resident in Basutoland, if it were possible to obtain the services of a trustworthy and judicious person, with limited duties of an advisory character and instructions to furnish political information of value to Government : such an appointment would in his opinion operate powerfully for the preservation of peace and good order. The Secretary of State “ entirely approved ” of the proposal in a despatch of 5th June 1862. Yet, strange to say, though everything pointed to the wisdom of such a course and all parties were favourable to it, no steps whatever were taken to give effect to it. Thus, another great opportunity to avert disorders was neglected by the British authorities who were content to let misunderstandings grow until the fair land became a welter of bloodshed.

Although these negotiations proved fruitless of any useful result as between the Basuto and the British Government, they were not without effect upon the minds and conduct of the parties in antagonism. Whilst the Free State felt irritated in consequence of what it deemed unnecessary Imperial interference calculated to weaken its resolve to insist upon observance

of treaty rights in respect of boundaries, the Basuto felt encouraged to keep open their claim to territory by plaguing the border farmers with encroachments in the northern districts from Harrismith down to Me-kuatling. Many of the settlers failed through the unsettled state of affairs to occupy effectively farms to which they were entitled under Sir George Grey's award. This nervousness on their part was attributed to fear and the sight of untilled land tempted the natives to cultivate and overrun it with cattle. To such an extent was this carried on that the boundary lines ceased to have any meaning and, in one of the encounters that naturally arose, a young Boer was killed in protecting his rights. Commandant Every in a patrol report stated that practically all the farms within  $2\frac{1}{2}$  hours of the border were deserted and in possession of Basuto who destroyed everything thereon ; wherefore, the burghers refused to pay their taxes and the State was impoverished of revenue.

These incidents induced the Volksraad in March 1862 to send a Commission headed by J. J. Venter to Thaba Bosigo with somewhat loose instructions to demand amongst other things reparation in the shape of a cession of land as compensation for thefts, and the surrender of the men accused of the murder above mentioned. This badly represented Commission, according to Venter's Report, was treated with the utmost contempt ; they were kept dallying about some days before being received, and finally, it was alleged, Moshesh utilized the occasion to work off his spleen against the Free State as a whole, blaming the President and burghers alike for all the past troubles, and refusing

to respect boundaries or to surrender the murderers to Courts where no justice was obtainable, but offering to console the relatives of the deceased with cattle if similar compensation was paid in return for numbers of Basuto who had been slaughtered.

President Pretorius was indignant at this treatment of his envoys and, summoning his Volksraad, received instructions to proceed to Cape Town for the purpose of personally remonstrating with the High Commissioner whose recent attitude and correspondence was held to be as damaging to the Free State as it was emboldening to the Basuto. Sir Philip Wodehouse gave him a courteous reception, regretting to learn that so many farms on the border were untenable owing to aggressive encroachment from Basutoland. In response to urgent representations that he should appoint a Commission to determine the Winburg-Harrismith boundary he agreed to do so subject to an unqualified acceptance of the decision by both sides. In that sense he wrote to Moshesh on August 26 ; yet he unfortunately incurred the risks of delay, allowing months to pass without any attempt to follow up his promise. His own mind was apparently clear upon the subject, but he had the example of Sir George Grey's sacrifice and was without doubt enervated by the repeated warnings from England on no account to take any action likely to commit Her Majesty's Government. He was under that spell perhaps when on November 9 he wrote in a comforting way to the President saying he had received frequent reports of the proceedings of the Basuto "prophets" (a certain Mantsupha and others suffering from dreams and revelations from the spirits of ancestors), which

did not lead him to apprehend disturbances *at present*. A letter from the President to him two days earlier which crossed in the post stated: "In Winburg blood has been shed. The other day a Boer shot a Basuto, and the next day they murdered the farmer's son."

So matters drifted on, varied by incidents that would be amusing if they had no dangerous side. For instance, on December 1, Letsie wrote to the President complaining of a troop of burghers who at midnight rushed a village on the slopes of Thaba Bosigo for the purpose of spiking his father's gun—the only one the Chief possessed. The party was piloted by Tsekelo, a renegade son of Moshesh; it was an old brass ship cannon most dangerous to those who manned it. The attempt failed; but it afforded the Basuto an opportunity to complain of such action in time of peace. Another matter showed the contempt of good relations. The Free State Government despairing of the delay in the boundary question wrote to Moshesh naming a date and place for a Commission to meet him and settle it. To this a reply was sent: "I am directed by the Chief Moshesh to inform you that he has duly received your letter. As regards the meeting of the Land Commission, he says the Basutos are very busy in their gardens and have no time to spare to do anything else for the moment."

Then on January 14, 1863, President Pretorius reminded the High Commissioner in so many words that a lot of dirty water had run under the bridge since many months ago he had offered his services, and of the necessity of His Excellency taking some immediate steps to indicate the northern boundaries which had

been left obscure by his predecessors, who were alone to blame for present troubles. This letter instead of moving Sir Philip Wodehouse to redeem his promise caused him apparently to waver, for on February 3 he wrote circular letters to Bloemfontein and Basutoland intimating that he much preferred the idea of the responsible parties making an effort to settle their affairs mutually by friendly negotiation.

Pretorius was so disturbed in mind by this kind of diplomatic vacillation that he threw up the Presidency in despair and returned to the Transvaal, leaving Mr. J. J. Venter to act in his place until a final election could be held.

The acting President, who always managed to keep on amicable terms with the Basuto, deeming it his duty to make an effort to ameliorate conditions on the northern border, immediately repaired there to meet Makotoko, one of the most capable men in Basutoland, sent by Moshesh to verify beacons and calm if possible the alarm of the farmers. That meeting, though unattended with any show or demonstration, was not without significance. Venter, after toiling hard for some days over the inhospitable country, gave up the beacon verification, admitting that the farmers who had been foremost in complaint had failed to come forward and assist him. "I am alone," he said, "an old man and grey-headed, and have come far, but the Boers do not come to help me; when their stock is lost they easily recover it from Molapo in Basutoland with compensation, and that is the reason they don't come to see the line or want any change."

Makotoko and his colleagues had other suspicions,



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SIR JOHN BRAND,  
President of the Orange Free State.





viz. that some of the early beacons had been "altered" to the disadvantage of many long-established Basuto villages and hence the origin of many altercations. But, if the meeting had no material result, it drew from the President a letter dated March 30, 1863, to Moshesh warmly acknowledging his kind reception and reciprocity of effort on this occasion. It is necessary to place that on record as a set-off to the many charges of contemptuousness against the Chief. Other abortive Commissions followed; but the reports were unanimous that Moshesh when brought to close quarters would only agree to a line of boundary proposed by himself that would cut out about 250 Free State farms.

On the 6th July, 7th August and 30th December 1863 the President renewed his solicitations to Sir Philip Wodehouse who replied at intervals that he was willing to act if all parties consented but took no effective steps to obtain that consent. Imperial policy was so hampering as to lead him to view with unconcern the deplorable trend of affairs, though occasionally he broke away, blaming his predecessors and Her Majesty's Government as in a letter of January 14, 1864, for guaranteeing the independence of the Orange River Territory without entering into complete definition of its limits. The correspondence of the time discloses a studied neglect on the part of Her Majesty's Government to mend the errors and omissions of the past, and an unbecoming retreat from difficulties.

In February 1864 we are introduced to a new factor in the situation, viz. Mr. John H. Brand, the courteous and accomplished President of the Orange Free State then elected to that office. For many years he presided

over the destinies of that State with a combination of firmness and gentleness which won the admiration alike of his subjects and neighbours in South Africa.

Mr. Brand at once realized the danger of drifting. The day after being sworn in he addressed a powerful letter, dated February 5, 1864, to Sir Philip Wodehouse which stirred him a little to the recollection of his ancient promises. Recalling the Treaty of 1858 promoted by Sir George Grey, the uncompleted and obscure northern boundary with Basutoland, and the obligations due to South Africa from its High Commissioner, he urged His Excellency to tackle the vexatious boundary question and remove the great cause of dissension, so far-reaching in its effects, by proceeding to the spot and acting with that authority to which, as coming from the representative of the Queen, all parties would assuredly bow. To Moshesh, Mr. Brand wrote in the same lofty though kind tone affirming his intention to uphold right and justice and inviting for investigation any reasonable complaints against past injustice towards Basutoland.

Sir Philip Wodehouse replied in the stereotyped form, viz. that he was prepared to offer his services in extricating the parties from their painful and embarrassing position if his mediation was distinctly accepted by both. The expression had worn itself threadbare. However, his good intentions advanced a stage, for he named a month hence as the date he would reach Aliwal North to commence operations. All concerned were so informed and made preparations. President Brand in reply on the 19th February stated that when announcing the glad tidings to his Volksraad

a glow of satisfaction was to be seen on the countenance of each member. Moshesh, in accepting mediation, wrote with some irony to His Excellency: "Your letter is so full of good precepts that I should like to bring it under the notice of all my Chiefs." The Chief assented unconditionally in formal documents under his hand and seal, relying upon the strength of his rights and the Governor's sense of justice.

Two months were taken up with a flaccid correspondence between the High Commissioner and President Brand as to the terms upon which the former would mediate. No sooner had he agreed to undertake it than a dread of the responsibility which might recoil upon the Imperial Government overcame him. Writing from Grahamstown on 26th February he dwelt upon the uselessness of a long journey unless his decision was to be considered final; therefore he must feel sure in advance that he would be allowed to make such modifications of the strict description of the northern line as he might consider fair and reasonable. President Brand in his letter of March 8th repeated the assurance that the Free State would be bound by the decision; but, he stated, he was not empowered by his Volksraad to vary in principle from the Treaty line, which was binding upon all, except in so far as it was necessary to stabilitate it.

Eventually the High Commissioner and President both reached Aliwal North. From camps one mile apart on either side of the Orange River a laboured exchange of letters took place between them on March 16. The Governor, not satisfied with the assurance offered him, expressed himself bound to

withdraw from the transaction, leaving it to the two principal parties to adjust their own boundaries—a thing which it had been long manifest they were absolutely unable to do. The President, aghast at this unhappy *impasse*, pleaded for an interview : they met on March 17 but without arriving at any understanding. Sir Philip Wodehouse then signified his refusal to proceed further with the matter, his reason being that the Free State Volksraad was not prepared to grant him that authority and discretion which he held to be essential in determining what was just and reasonable.

This fiasco at an end, Sir Philip Wodehouse rode to Thaba Bosigo a week later in order to explain to Moshesh the position of affairs and the reason of his withdrawal from the negotiations. It was lamentable that they should have broken down in this lame fashion for, in addition to the loss of valuable time, the Basuto were certain to interpret the misunderstanding as favourable to themselves and to presume upon it, as they did. The points at issue between Governor and President were not insuperable. The one demanded absolute discretion ; the other was agreeable to it provided a proclaimed Treaty was taken as a basis. The only real difficulty requiring solution turned upon the doubtful sphere of influence claimed by Moshesh after he struck and vanquished Sikonyela and Taaibosch. The Warden line skirted this sphere and both sides were in partial occupation of it.

President Brand did not subside under this temporary reverse. He called his Volksraad together in special session to explain matters. That body thereupon passed a resolution in the following terms and

further invested him with power to remove any obstacle that would hinder its fulfilment.

“RESOLUTION : 5 *May* 1864

“ . . . The Volksraad therefore, placing full reliance in the good cause of the Orange Free State and in the justice and impartiality of His Excellency the Governor, has after mature deliberation resolved again to call in the mediation of His Excellency, in virtue of Article 2 of the said Treaty, for the purpose of pointing out the boundary line and deciding the disputes at present existing in respect thereof, and to empower His Excellency to make such modifications in the strict descriptions of the line of Major Warden to the north of Jammerberg Drift, mentioned in Article 1 of the said Treaty of 1858, as His Excellency may consider just and reasonable and calculated to ensure the maintenance of peaceful relations, and that His Excellency’s decision will be considered as final. . . .”

This resolution was communicated to the High Commissioner in a letter of the 6th May (extract) :—

PRESIDENT OF ORANGE FREE STATE *to* HIGH  
COMMISSIONER

“ . . . I sincerely hope and trust that Your Excellency will now be willing to proceed with the good work, which will be productive of lasting benefits. It is of great importance that the decision of this question should take place as soon as possible, since the natives are daily encroaching more and more on our territory, and our farmers, aware of the pending negotiation and

desirous of avoiding everything that may in the meantime lead to collision, have temporarily come further inward. Thefts are of daily occurrence, and it is not expedient or desirable to take stringent measures at this very moment. But as soon as the vexed question has been satisfactorily settled by Your Excellency's mediation, we shall be able to inaugurate such measures as may tend to secure the peaceable enjoyment of their property by our frontier farmers.

“(Signed) J. H. BRAND,  
“ President.”

Sir Philip Wodehouse in possession of this resolution and request giving him the full powers he demanded had no alternative but to accept : he notified the parties to be ready *five months hence* and on the 6th October arrived at Jammerberg Drift on the Caledon River where had assembled a great concourse of people including President Brand with his commandants and officials, Moshesh surrounded by his sons, councillors and people, together with many missionaries, farmers and interested spectators.

A brief Conference ensued. A well-written and carefully prepared memorandum read by President Brand, similar in character to that laid before Sir George Grey, exhibited the case of the Orange Free State and claimed, in addition, confirmation in all essentials of the Warden line as amended and partly beacons under the Treaty of 1858.

The case for Basutoland was badly presented, consisting of the claim to a vague tract of country as far as Bloemfontein and the Vaal River on which

had lived 33 tributary clans whose names were handed in and whose deserted villages and ruined kralls were the standing evidence. No heed was paid to past Agreements or Treaties to which Moshesh, willingly or not, had subscribed. By filing his claim in this preposterous form Moshesh committed a grave error which alienated from him much sympathy otherwise felt for him by the Governor and others. But, it must be remembered that there were no strong minds at hand ready to advise him though many perhaps were willing. His prompters on the other hand were his headstrong sons and Chiefs elated with success at the successful defiance of all previous agreements. That at heart the old Chief wanted settlement and was sincere in submitting to arbitration is unquestionable. He was however overwhelmed by the noisy clamour of the wilder factions and his reason forsook him. Had he maintained against odds that day a judicious attitude and moderated his pretensions, he might have been spared the disasters soon to follow.

No serious effort seems to have been made to promote such a discussion as might have brought the conflicting claims back to some common point from which they might all have started on the way to a mutual understanding upon the issues involved—a discussion, that is, led off in the spirit of compromise. It is obvious that a dispute of such long standing might easily have absorbed several days in debate and elucidation, and that then some reason might have dawned on the minds of the natives who, however obstinate at first, are notoriously amenable if allowed unrestrained speech. But it was not so. The Governor,

repeating the error committed and regretted by General Cathcart, abruptly closed the Conference after bare opening formalities, upon which Moshesh returned disconsolate to Thaba Bosigo, being nearly drowned as he crossed the swollen river in a rotten boat, clutching in his hand as a passport the rags of an old Union Jack.

Next day, viz. October 8, the Governor started on a laborious journey to the furthest extremity of the disputed border in the vicinity of Natal, accompanied by Commissioners from both sides, and, after inspecting carefully all the principal points in the line, hurried back to Aliwal North whence he announced his decision in a Proclamation.

#### PROCLAMATION OF BOUNDARY LINE

“I, Philip Edmond Wodehouse, Governor of the Colony of the Cape of Good Hope, having undertaken, in terms of the Treaty signed at Aliwal North on 29th September, 1858, at the request of the Government of the Orange Free State and with the full consent of the Chief Moshesh, to mark out the Boundary Line between the Districts of Harri-smith, Winburg, Bloemfontein and Caledon River, down to Jammerberg Drift, and Basutoland, do hereby declare that the following shall be the Boundary Line between the said Districts and Basutoland, that is to say :—

“From Jammerberg Drift the Line shall be that agreed upon between Mr. Pretorius, the late President of the Orange Free State, and the Great Chief Moshesh, at Maboela, in the month of April 1861, and de-



scribed in a Proclamation dated the 18th of that month, to a point named Karee Fontein. (Here commences the Boundary between the Orange Free State and the lands of the Chief Moroko, which continues to Klipplaats Drift, on the great Vet River.) From Klipplaats Drift the Line shall proceed to the crossing of the old trek-path from Thaba Nchu to Leeuwkop and the road from Mekuatleng to Winburg, at a point bearing due west from the Northern extremity of Korannaberg.

“From thence to the K. B. B. Beacon on the Morabadi Tsoga ; from thence to Gouverneur’s Kop ; from thence to Lot’s Pillar ; from thence to Sikonyela’s Hoed ; from thence to the Western extremity, bearing  $87\frac{2}{3}^{\circ}$  from Sikonyela’s Hoed, of the Roods Berg Range, dividing the waters of the Caledon from those of the Vaal ; and from thence along that range to a high peak at its summit, surrounded on all sides by perpendicular rocks, and immediately overlooking the farm of Groen Draai.

“Given at Aliwal North this 28th day of October, 1864.

“(Signed) P. E. WODEHOUSE.”

This delimitation was, if anything, more vaguely worded than either of its forerunners and was neither surveyed nor beacons off effectively. In those respects it fell far short of being useful ; but a good deal depended upon the considerations by which the Governor was guided ; those he proceeded to state to Moshesh, President Brand and the Secretary of State as follows :—

*Letter from the HIGH COMMISSIONER to the  
CHIEF MOSHESH*

(Extract.)

“ALIWAL NORTH, 28 Oct., 1864.

“GREAT CHIEF,

“Having now finished my inspection of the lands situated near the boundary between the Orange Free State and the Territory of the Basutos, and being in a position to point out what, in my opinion, should form the Boundary Line between them, I think it right to accompany the description of the Line, herewith enclosed, with some explanatory observations for your information. . . .

“It is not disputed that in times gone by all the lands now forming the Free State, the Transvaal and Basutoland were in the possession of different Tribes, some Basutos and some not, and that all in the course of the many wars that occurred passed into the possession of various owners.

“Neither is it disputed that, before the establishment in this part of the country of any European Government, European farmers migrated from the Cape Colony, and obtained the consent of the Chiefs to occupy farms within their respective territories.

“After this had occurred the British Government became possessed, by force of arms, of the country now forming the Orange Free State, and granted to those whom it found in occupation of the farms certificates admitting their right to them, and promising that surveys should in due time be made. The British Government likewise, on the 18th December 1849, published a Proclamation defining the Boundaries that

should in future be observed between their own possessions (the present Free State) and the lands of the several Chiefs, including yourself, by which they were surrounded.

“ These Boundaries were described in the Proclamation as those arranged by the British Resident, Major Warden. Subsequently Her Majesty relinquished her possessions, which were constituted into the Orange Free State, and in the course of a few years from that time, a war broke out between that state and yourself, which was brought to a close through the mediation of Sir George Grey. The Treaty which was signed at Aliwal for that purpose on the 29th September 1858, by your duly authorized Commissioners, contained a distinct recognition of the so-called Warden Line, subject to modification by the Governor of the Cape Colony . . . and received your ratification on the 15th October, 1858. . . .

“ What is the present state of affairs? From one end of the Line to the other, and in most cases to a considerable distance within the Line, parties of your tribe, without a pretence of right, and without any formal declaration on your part, have squatted on the several farms, have established villages, cultivated large tracts of land, introduced large quantities of cattle, and have, by intimidation, driven off the lawful owners. Everywhere are to be seen deserted and roofless farm houses, with valuable orchards fast going to destruction.

“ It seems impossible for any one called upon to act as a mediator between two parties, to countenance acts so completely lawless in character, possessing no claim

to be viewed in a more favourable light than ordinary thefts.

“Moreover, if I could under any circumstances have reconciled myself to supporting in some degree this lawless system of appropriation, the inclination to do so must have been wholly extinguished by the preposterous pretensions set up by those whom you selected to accompany me as Commissioners.

“Each in his turn, as we were passing through the lands in which he was immediately interested, put forth claims which in the aggregate would have involved the extinction of the Orange Free State. . . . The only modification, therefore, of the Warden Line which appeared to me admissible was that assented to by the British Authorities, before the establishment of the Free State; for the accommodation of Gert Taaibosch and his tribe, then occupying that part of the country. . . .

“I am, your Friend, Governor and High Commissioner,

“(Signed) P. E. WODEHOUSE.”

*From the* HIGH COMMISSIONER *to* PRESIDENT  
ORANGE FREE STATE

(Extract.)

“ALIWAL NORTH, 28th Oct., 1864.

“. . . I beg to enclose copy of a letter I have addressed to Moshesh. . . .

“You will observe that the Warden Line has been maintained except in so far that . . . an alteration in favour of Gert Taaibosch should be allowed; and that I have pointed out in strong terms to Moshesh the

impropriety of the acts which have led to this negotiation, and the necessity for his checking anything of the kind in future.

“But I am in justice bound to express my extreme regret that the Government of the Free State did not at the very commencement of these encroachments make a determined effort to repress them. Had the first intruders been promptly punished, we may reasonably suppose that the evil would have been arrested. The absolute impunity they have hitherto enjoyed has tempted one party after another to advance into the Free State, until what was at first the act of mere squatters has come to assume a national character.

“ . . . I consider that the Free State should allow the Chief full time for the removal of his people from the farms on which they are living ; and that it may be found both practicable and advantageous to permit some to remain within the Free State upon conditions to be fully explained, and subject to instant removal for violation of them. . . .

“(Signed) P. E. WODEHOUSE.”

The decision, confirming to all intents the Free State claim, fell upon Moshesh with a shock. Was it fair or wise to throw upon him the entire blame for disputes arising from an admittedly ill-defined boundary ? It was calculated to make him desperate and did so. The blow was however mitigated in large degree by the announcement made previously by the Governor that every one concerned must clearly understand that he had neither the intention, nor the

disposition, nor the authority to take the slightest step for enforcing compliance with his award, in the event of either party breaking off from his present agreement : he was confident Her Majesty's Government would entirely disapprove of any such interference in the dispute, and that therefore they must take on their own shoulders the consequences of the arrangement.

It had lain in the Governor's power, in virtue of the great office he held, to perform a memorable service, the enduring effect of which was imperilled by this countervailing statement neither called for nor expected. Nothing in fact could have tended more to vitiate it and neutralize the effort he and all had undoubtedly made to secure a settlement ; in the absence of compelling force, it was almost an invitation to either party to despise the whole proceeding.

In reporting to the Secretary of State after returning to Cape Town on November 26, Sir Philip Wodehouse confidently maintained that throughout the trying ordeal he had adopted the only alternative consistent with substantial justice and reason ; but he was not sanguine that the Free State would act with patience and forbearance in fulfilling the award, for their first steps, in spite of his advice, appeared hasty and ill-advised in respect of the summary orders for ejection of natives affected, the consequences of which would fall on their own head as he had little confidence in their power to contend successfully with the Basutos.

If that however was his opinion, it is hard to

reconcile it with his letter to the President of October 28 above quoted wherein he censured the Free State for not being sufficiently bold and demonstrative.

From every point of view the Governor's task was always difficult—doubly so by delaying as he did to face it twelve months earlier. He had not disguised beforehand a certain partiality towards the Basuto but felt in honour bound to give a decision wholly favourable to the Free State. If any sanctity was to be placed in Treaties and Solemn Agreements, we must admit that his decision could not have been otherwise. The flaws in it were that the Basuto were not encouraged to accept it in advance by permitting them to argue their case freely, and by telling them in the end that no force would compel them to obey it.

The position at the close of 1864 was thus :—

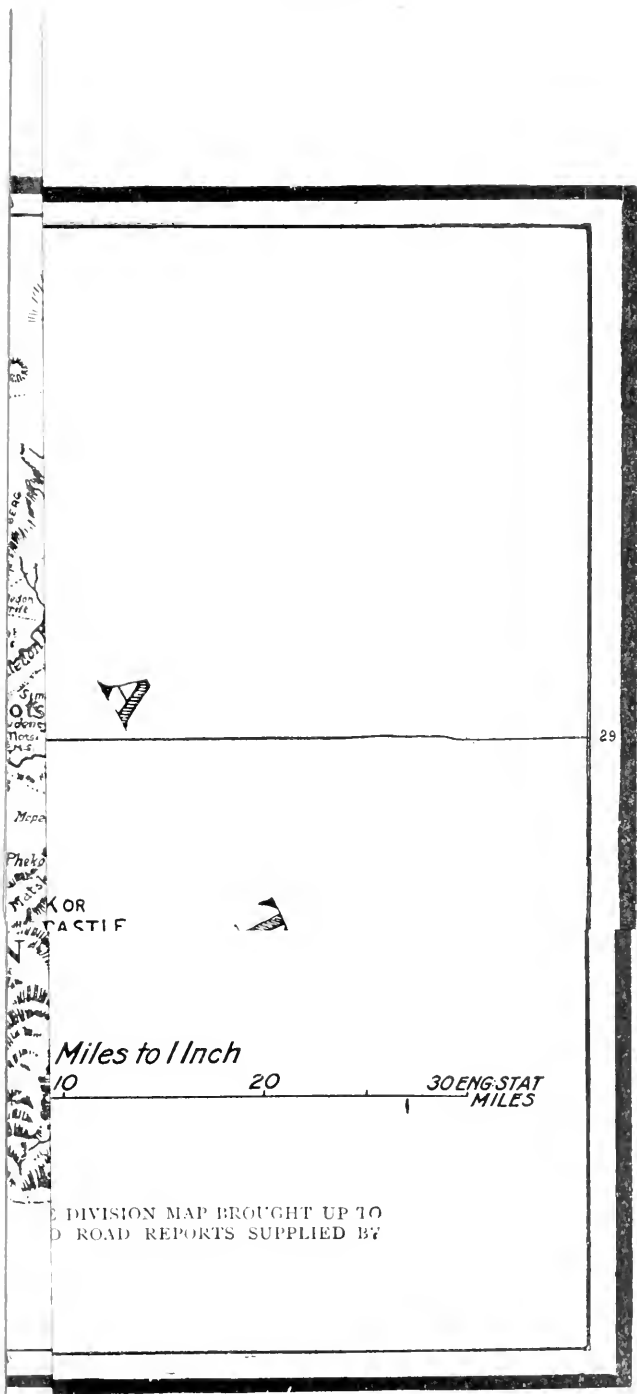
The Free State had appealed to Caesar and were satisfied ; they felt morally justified before the world in defending or fighting for the land awarded to them.

The Basuto were disappointed and should have honoured the award but failed to do so.

END OF VOL. I

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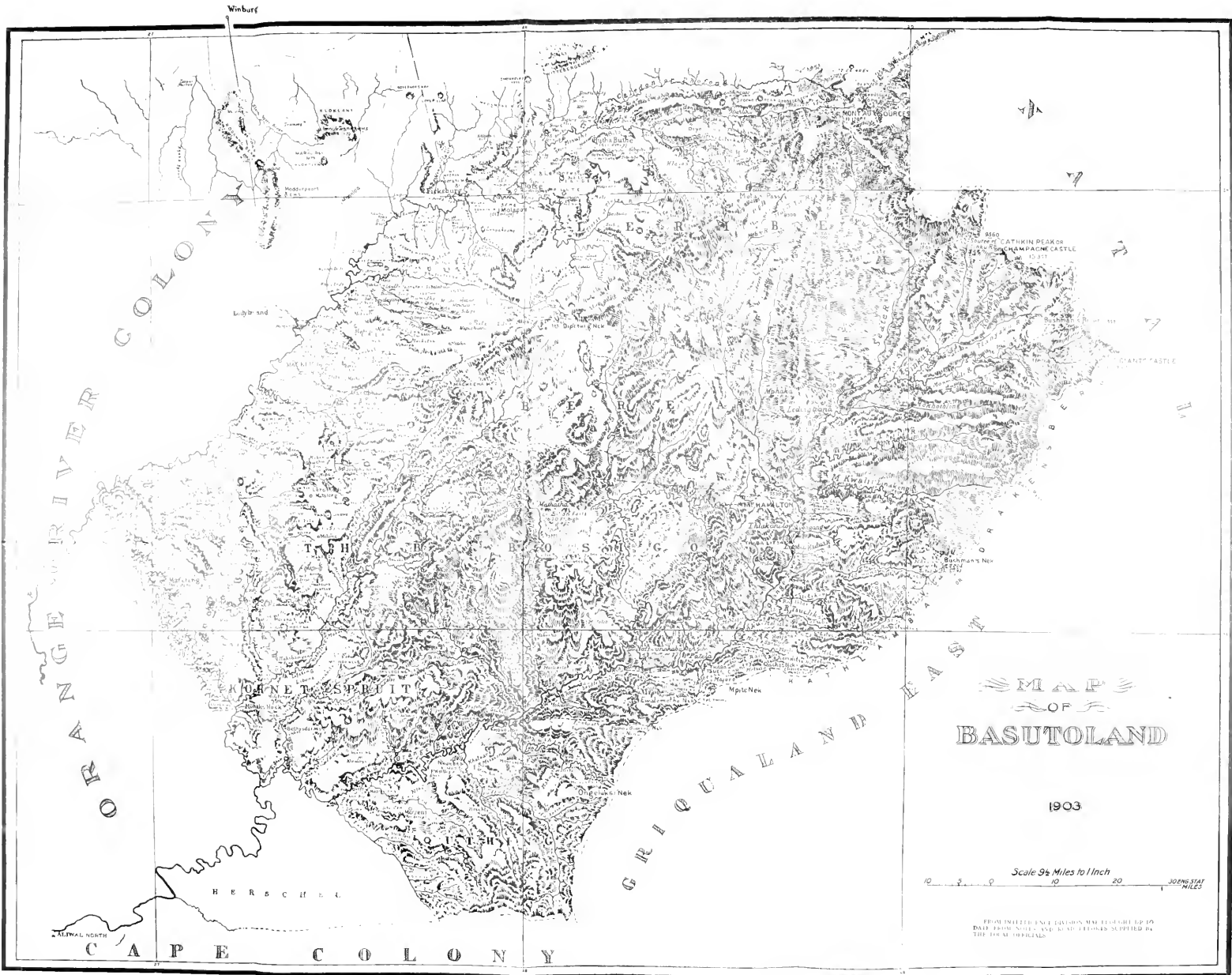


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